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“THE INSEPARABLES.”



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INSEPARABLES

BY

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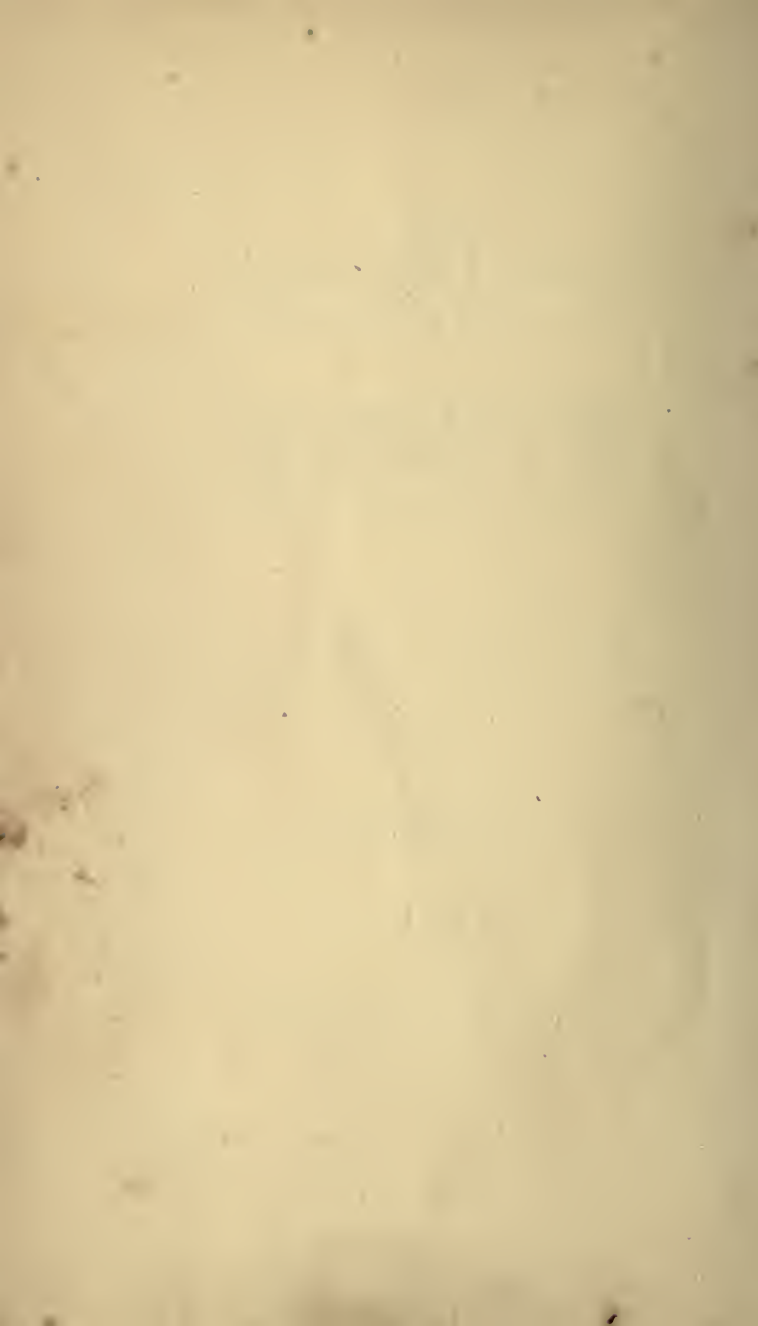
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“The Inseparables.”



CHAPTER I.

A College Speech Day.

The spacious grounds of the fine college of St. Francis Xavier, Kew, Melbourne, presented a bright and animated spectacle one lovely afternoon in December 1904. It was the annual speech-day. The parents and friends of the students as well as hundreds of invited guests, benefactors and well-wishers were pouring in one continual stream from Baker Station up the college drive or dashed by in carriages, motor-cars and hansoms. The bright, brilliant blue of the Southern summer sky overhead, the golden sunshine, the green lawns,

and shady trees and stately college buildings, all combined made a pleasant setting for the gay costumes of the ladies who were escorted round the grounds and buildings by groups of happy bright-faced boys.

The joy of the lads on the eve of their emancipation from axioms and angles and problems, from rules and syntax and the musty phantasies of Virgil and Ovid, or the hoary rhetoric of Cicero and Demosthenes was shared very heartily by the well-dressed assembly of their friends. Typical of the glad youth of the young Southern nation was the scene. The laughter of the boys, the pleasant animated conversation of their friends all this lively chatter and mirth voiced the buoyant spirits of the sons and daughters of sun-kissed Australia.

The ringing of the college-bell was the signal for professors, visitors and students to leave the grounds for the commodious Aula Maxima. The Prefect of Studies read his report. The presiding magnate spoke cheery words of encouragement to the lucky prize-winners as they came up to the dais for their laurels, then an eloquent eulogy on the magnificent educational work so successfully executed and propagated by the Jesuit Fathers in

this splendidly equipped college. After this there were several other erudite speeches. These over, the academical atmosphere of the speech-hall was abandoned for the bright sunlight of the quadrangle with its palms and magnolias glowing softly green in the golden sunlight.

Dispersed in groups over the lawn, the visitors were entertained and treated to afternoon tea by the Fathers and students. One group attracted considerable attention, doubtless because two of the college boys who were helping the party to refreshments were the lads who were most successful at the recent distribution, and perhaps also because the lady who smiled so lovingly on the handsome fellows was so distinguished-looking.

The Rector Father Hastings came over to this group. After he had greeted the lady and the two girls who were the other members of the party, Mrs Marshall for this was the lady's name said to her sons.

"Victor will you and Norman show these girls the view from the tower. I wish to speak privately with Father Rector for a little while."

"Here Victor is the key of the staircase door." Father Hastings added "Do not forget the Sodality meeting this evening boys and please come to

my room before you leave the college. You will find me there at six."

The young people strolled away. The Rector and Mrs Marshall resumed the conversation.

"Were you not proud of your boys to-day Mrs. Marshall? Between them both they secured the principal prizes. But they certainly deserved them. Not only are they the most talented students we've had but they have utilized their talents by strenuous work during the year."

"Yes Father, but I would rather see them the biggest dullards in the college, than successful as they have been should these talents of theirs prove a menace to their fidelity to religion. I am full of fears and anxieties for my boys. To-day they leave Xavier college. Their father is ambitious that they should distinguish themselves at the University. The circle of friends he will introduce them to are most of them absolutely irreligious. Deprived of your holy guidance Father and away from the Catholic atmosphere of Xavier's, I fear that they like their father will lose their faith."

"Do not be downcast Mrs Marshall. It is true the godless surroundings at the University are fraught with peril for Catholic young men, but God is good. Victor I am quite confident is too

deeply religious too steadfast to be affected by any contrary influences, but of Norman I am not so sure. I fear he is too ambitious and worldly-minded, but he has many splendid traits of character. Let us put our trust in God my friend, your prayers and example will keep them on the right path."

"God grant our prayers may be answered Father Hastings, but Father the fact that my husband, though he occupies such an honoured position is a renegade from his faith will I fear counteract in a great way any influence for good that I may have over my boys, now especially when they are in a sense to fight their own battles in the world."

"Oh well we must hope for the best. At all events they have received a thorough religious instruction here. Even if they do alas like other young fellows yield to temptation and drift away, let us trust that the memory of their days of faith at Xavier's will finally bring them back to the right path."

"Yes Father, let us hope so. God knows I would welcome poverty to-morrow, should loss of wealth and position bring Henry back to his Church."

Father Hastings did not reply. The boys with their young friends were returning. Looking into the Mother's eyes as she gazed wistfully towards her boys, the priest beheld the expression of her great love for her children together with her pride in her gifted handsome sons and the anguish of her pure soul lest contact with the world should sully the hearts of her beloved boys. Hers was a striking face, queenly in its perfect beauty, with a sad chastened expression that years fraught with a great sorrow had impressed on it. Her figure superb. Her dress elegant and costly, but in no way showy or unbecoming the dignity of a Catholic matron.

Irene Talbot must have been very beautiful in those days long ago when the young Dublin barrister Harry Marshall wooed and won her. But far more lovely and spirituelle did she look now that she had passed through the crucible of years of suffering.

Soon after their marriage Harry Marshall and his young wife came to Australia and settled in Melbourne. Marshall a splendid Catholic in the old land remained faithful for the first few years of his life in the Southern Hemisphere to his religion and its obligations. The clever young bar-

rister after a few years ranked among the leaders of his profession. Wealth seemed to be thrown at him. His position and his fame obtained him an entree into the fashionable society of the Victorian metropolis. Unfortunately adulation and success with an inordinate ambition had at first made him careless and then gradually impaired his faith, until at the time of the opening of this story, he was an avowed unbeliever. The misery his defection had caused his young wife none realized save herself and her spiritual director, but his apostacy had made her life a martyrdom. Thanks to her own firmness her boys now eighteen and seventeen respectively had received their education at Xavier College. Her only other child Moira a girl of thirteen was still a boarder at the Genesano Convent. She knew however that the father would now assert his authority in his sons' regard. He determined that while he would not directly interfere with the boys' beliefs, yet he would insist on their entering into his set and associating with the sons of his intimate non-Catholic friends.

"Mother! you and Father Rector are looking as gloomy as if you had returned from a funeral. Victor exclaimed, "Whatever have you been discussing that has made you look so sad?"

"Oh I know," Norman interjected, "Dear old Mum has been lamenting the fact that you and I Vic are not to return here, and Father Rector has been sympathizing. Never mind Father. The world is now such a bad old place. I think it a right jolly globe and mean to get all the fun there is out of it."

"Well Norman my boy, I hope your opinion of the world will not be changed by experience, but mind it may be that you will come to dislike it even more than I do. I may live to see you a son of St. Ignatius yet, bright as is the glamour your youthful enthusiasm sheds over the unknown future."

"Ha ha ! Father. So you think I am going to play Francis Xavier to your Ignatius of Loyola. Oh no Father Hastings! Victor is more likely to become your disciple. As for me—well, I mean to be a great man. A great sinner perhaps you would say but I hope not. Still though I trust that for Mother's sake and yours I shall never lose the faith, I must say the religious life does not in any way appeal to me at present."

"Come Mother. Do not look so shocked. Norman as usual does not mean half what he says" Victor interposed. "These girls do not know

what on earth we are talking of. Father Hastings we will see Mother and the girls off. Norman and I must have a yarn with the lads before the Sodality meeting. We will see you in your room at six and pay our adieux."

Father Hastings shook hands with Mrs Marshall, Moira and Violet Harding, Moira's school-friend. He strolled down a private part of the grounds.

"Ah Norman my lad" he soliloquized. "I am afraid that even your bright happy nature will be changed before a few years and that even your imperious will and lofty ambitions will have to brook opposition and defeat. God grant, my boy that you do not become lost to grace. A great man: A great sinner or a great saint. Yes my lad I am afraid there are no medium flights for you. God grant that before you go irrevocably towards the first extreme His grace may touch you and you may tend your ambitions to higher aims. How I hate these annual parting-days. How many bright young lads have I bade adieu to every year since I first came here. Many of them even of the most promising and hopeful in paying cult to the world and its allurements have drifted away from the faith."

The old Rector asked himself how this sad fact

came about, but the solution was not difficult to find. The most dangerous years in a man's life, the years most fraught with temptation, too, are the years between fourteen and twenty-one. Some young fellows before this perilous time has ended have acquired a fund of solid faith and sterling piety that makes them proof against all the temptations to infidelity and immorality that the world will muster up against them. But there are others and these not a few whose characters are not so matured in goodness who like tropical plants will not thrive once they are removed from the hot-house so to speak of the Catholic School where they were supplied with the most generous spiritual aliments for their young souls. Once removed from the salutary restraints of the Catholic college, they find themselves left to themselves to rise or fall. They revel in the liberty so intoxicating in its novelty to their young natures. In a University where science is pursued without relation to God, where their fellow-students by an overwhelming majority regard God and things supernatural as only vague and very remote entities, where the professors are at most indifferent, or if their lectures do sometimes touch on things divine their views are utterly opposed to

Catholic teaching and Catholic theology. In such an atmosphere then, the faith of many Catholic young men hitherto fresh and vigorous suffers a complete overthrow and the young aspirations of purity and religion in their hearts are blasted and blighted in uncongenial surroundings.

Father Hastings in his musings, like many other right-thinking men bewailed the non-existence in the state of a Catholic University. A true University, for what claim can any institution so-called no matter how well endowed materially and intellectually; what claim can it advocate to the name of University in its true sense when it excludes from its curriculum the most important science of all—the science of God and of things divine.

Cardinal Newman put the position splendidly “A University, I should lay down” he says, “by its very nature professes to teach universal knowledge. Theology is surely a branch of knowledge: how then is it possible for it to profess all branches of knowledge, and yet to exclude from the subjects of its teaching one which, to say the least is as important and as large as any of them?

“Ah well!” Father Hastings sighed half aloud.

"I must not be melancholy, though I cannot help being sad at the prospect of the lives of two such fine young fellows being blighted. But if the prayers of a devoted mother are all powerful with God, surely they will come through the ordeal unscathed."

An hour later in a corner of the grounds Victor, Norman and two other lads of about the same age as the young Marshalls were arranging for a mountain excursion to Mount Buffalo. They had been looking forward to this trip for some months. George Harding, Violet's brother had proposed it to the Marshalls and to their other special chum Frank Coleman. The suggestion was well received and the proposition carried unanimously by the Inseparables as the four were styled by the priests and the other students at Xavier College. Now they were making the final arrangements. George Harding whose father was a wealthy station-owner in the North-East intimated that he would go home to "Mundoona" on the morrow, but he arranged that his friends should join him there on the 2nd of January and then a week later they would set out for the mountains.

"Now lads everything is squared" George exclaimed. "I shall expect the three of you on the

2nd of January. Should any of you disappoint well I advise you steer clear of George Harding for a time."

"Don't worry Hardy old boy," Norman answered "we'll be there. Hurrah lads! It's going to be a grand old time. The rides round the station at "Mundoona," the shooting and fun up the mountains, then when the vac. is over what a shine we fellows will cut at the 'Varsity. Whoop! It's just delightful."

"Keep quiet Norman" Victor remonstrated. The Prefect will think we've gone mad. Besides lads though it's pleasant to think of such a jolly time ahead. I for one am genuinely sorry to think that this is our last evening at dear old Xavier's."

"So are we all Vic." Frank agreed. "We've had a happy time here. Whew! It's five o'clock and the meeting is at half-past. I've got all my packing to do yet. Good-bye lads. Norman and Vic. I will go out to Camberwell to-morrow, we shall then fix up things. Good bye George. Have the band out when we arrive at "Mundoona."

George joined another group of boys on their promenade down the lawn. Victor and Norman went to the Rector's room. The kindly advice

and sincere good-wishes of the revered old Jesuit they received with genuine gratitude. His fatherly counsel impressed itself so forcibly on their minds that long years afterwards they remembered and cherished it.



CHAPTER II.

Judge Marshall.

"Irene, what can be detaining those boys? I expected they would come home with you. I cannot understand what is detaining them."

"Oh Henry, you could not expect them to run away with me without having paid their adieux to the boys and the Fathers. Lads have ever so much to say to one another on the eve of the holidays, especially when like our boys they are leaving the college for good. Besides Father Rector asked them to attend the Sodality meeting at half-past five so they could not very well get here before this."

"What rubbish Irene! I am afraid your worthy friends the Jesuits have made those fellows too sentimental. It's a good thing they will have none of this nonsense at the University next year. These prayers and devotions are all very well for women-folks but men have no time for them."

"Henry why will you pain me so!" Mrs. Marshall pleaded. The flush that mounted to her

gentle face and the tremor in her voice told how much she had been hurt. "Let me ask you my husband not to instil these ideas into the minds of our boys. Why should religion and its obligations be deemed fit for women only when the first duties of every human being are those that relate to God." Ah Henry, you did not think or speak in this way in those happy days long ago when your faith was to you all in all. I am certain now that you are rich and honoured you are not so happy as you were when we were both rich only in faith and love for our holy religion."

"Irene dearest, I did not mean to wound you," the Judge replied. "Yes those were happy days." "But" he added as if to stifle the whisperings of conscience his wife's words had roused, "I have changed since those days. I see things in a different light now, and my little wife what does it matter since my love for you has not changed one whit?"

Mrs Marshall sighed but did not reply. The sudden entrance into the dining-room of Victor, Norman and their friend George Harding was welcomed by the Judge, who did not care for the trend which the conversation had taken.

"Hallo Pap! Are we late?" Norman greeted as

he, Victor and their friend bustled into the room. "Sorry, but we had to say good-bye to the lads. Then Father Rector asked us to attend a meeting of the Sodality chaps. Anyhow we're here now and delightfully hungry. Eh! George."

"Very well lads, I will not scold you this time. But remember in future you must not keep us waiting dinner for you young gentlemen. Punctuality is a virtue I admire and insist on at 'Kincora.' "

"Right you are Pap. Now ring up the victuals and you can lecture us to your heart's content."

Judge Marshall did not check the school-boy sauciness of his son. He enjoyed the exuberant spirits of the lads, and during the meal the family-party was a merry one indeed. The bright glowing lads inspired a gaiety that was infectious. The Judge listened with pride when he heard of all their prizes. Mrs Marshall looked young and bright as she helped the young people most generously to the good things prepared in their honour. The girls, Violet and Moira teased the boys. Their gay laughter at the facetious remarks of Norman and George made bright music round the elegantly appointed dinner-table.

"How did the Governor speak at your function at Xavier College, Victor?" the Judge queried.

"Oh all right! The only fault I found with his speech was that it was too long."

"That's just what I say Vic" Norman exclaimed. "How is it Pap that you big guns can't attend even a tea-fight without making such tremendously big speeches? You all must be terribly long-winded. Could he not have congratulated us in a few words and given us our prizes and let us go? When he had done I thought we were free, but the row was only then commencing for several chaps on the stage took great pains to let us know how well versed they were in educational matters. Such a mighty fuss over the distribution of a few paltry prize-books!"

"Hallo Norman!" The Judge laughed, "It strikes me you are rather long-winded yourself. If ever you become a Member of Parliament, my lad, you will be famous for your powers of eloquent invective. Well Irene! I must be off. I promised Harper I would meet him at the Club to-night. So sorry I cannot spend the evening at home with you and the lads. Good-bye George. I may not see you to-morrow before you go home. Tell your father that I may run up after Xmas

for a few days. Good-bye Violet, little girl. A happy Xmas. If I meet Santa Claus I will tell him to keep a special supply of good things for "Mundoona."

"Oh Father! you are a tease. Fancy Santa Claus visiting a young lady like Violet. Why! She was fourteen last month and is almost as tall as George," Moira remonstrated.

"Ha Puss! Is this how the land lies? I suppose this is a roundabout way of telling me that you too consider yourself beyond the borders of toy-land, and expect a substantial Xmas gift from me. Well, perhaps I may give you a surprise."

Mrs Marshall accompanied her husband to the hall-door and bade him good-night. Though she had hoped that he would spend this evening with them at home, she did not express her wishes. She had become accustomed to her husband's frequent absence from his home and knew that it was worse than useless to remonstrate with him.

Her home was palatial in its splendid design and costly furniture. All that wealth can procure was her's, and yet Irene Marshall would have gladly bartered the elegance and luxury of her beautiful Camberwell home for the humblest cot-

tage and the bare necessities of life could she by so doing bring back her husband to his old faith.

Judge Marshall was not so self-complacent as usual that night as he drove to the city. His wife's gentle rebuke at the dinner-table had roused his dormant conscience somewhat. Though he strove to persuade himself that his defection from his old faith was the result of diligent enquiries into the reasonableness of some of the doctrines and dogmas of the Catholic Church, such was by no means the truth. He knew in his heart that the arguments and sophisms of the Rationalists, whose works he had studied, had no force whatsoever with him. His conscience often clamoured loudly within him in rebuke and reproof for his apostacy. In fine he had to acknowledge to himself, despite his endeavours to find logical apologies for his position, that his position was utterly illogical. But Harry Marshall, once so earnest in his beliefs, so steadfast in his attachment to the duties of his religion, had become a renegade in the full sense of the word. The new world where his talents had drawn attention to him had said to him: "Your religion is a barrier in the way of your advancement." Ambition's voice was arbitrary. Its alternative was "Let Conscience be

your guide, your monitor. Well then be content with a mediocre position in your profession, with an honest name and with a moderate possession of the ordinary enjoyments of life. Dethrone Conscience and set up Expedience in its place as your norma of action, then with your talents you have in your hands the golden key. You will be welcomed into the very best society. Advancement and preferment must come. Having cast off the shackles of your unfashionable beliefs, you will no longer be regarded with suspicion or distrust."

That night, somehow, Judge Marshall was in a frame of mind very unusual with one who had so successfully stifled his conscience and made himself impervious to any occasional qualms of remorse. He had enjoyed for years that "otium cum dignitate" that perfection of epicureanism, which his duties as judge did not disturb, for naturally active, his ideal of a purely worldly "summum bonum" was not absolute severance from public life. Nay, the glare and glitter of brilliant public functions, the forensic clash of wit and repartee at the courts where he presided gave just the necessary variety to his life. He had laboured long and toiled strenuously to reach the goal of his ambitions, after all this toil and stress his

present duties were to him but an enjoyable recreation.

As he passed up the velvet carpeted staircase of the Club he beheld his well-groomed figure reflected in the mirror on the landing. A handsome striking figure indeed. A strong fresh face bearing on every lineament the stamp and impress of intellect and culture. He thought of his position and realized that he was indeed a great man courted and admired by the world. The intimate of successive Governors. The lion of fashionable gatherings. The wit pre-eminent at literary banquets. The patron of science and letters—in fact an Alexander or a Macenas in his own sphere. But the old self-complacency did not follow his reflections on his own greatness that night. He could not help contrasting the calm domestic joy of evenings spent in the bosom of his family with the hollow glitter of grand social functions, the sweet pure beauty of his wife with the artificial manners and the painted charms of the women he met at such gatherings. Conscience for a few moments was triumphant. It showed up as by a vivid flash-light the cowardice that had caused him to barter cherished beliefs for a measure of worldly success. Perhaps the hardest reflection of all in this mom-

entary triumph of conscience was that another man with abilities and capabilities like to his, an Irishman and a Catholic too, had in this new land won a name and a fame, besides which his name was but an echo and his fame a shadow ; that years before him his great compatriot Charles Gavan Duffy had without compromising his religion or his nationality in the least placed his name in letters of gold in the history of Victoria, bejewelled by the tributes of love and reverence of all denominations.

Was it the writing on the wall that the Judge beheld that night? Did he read his Mane, Theckel, Phanes? Well if he did, he did not heed. He soon conquered the uneasiness, and in the Club that night, no one was so cheery, so gay or so sparkling as the great Judge Marshall.

CHAPTER III.

Mundoona.

“Hurrah lads! Here’s Glenrowan. Have a good look you chaps at the Kelly country.”

The Sydney express had steamed through the station of the little mountain township, famous because here the last act in the tragic drama of the lives of the dare-devil outlaws the Kellys was played. Sheer above the village rose Mount Morgan wooded to the summit. The place was indeed picturesque.

“Well boys! we’re near the end of our journey,” Victor continued, when he had admired the view. It’s only ten miles to Wangaratta, and a run down-hill the whole way. Here Norman, give up grinning at those bushies out there and give us a hand. We must get this luggage together.”

“Just a moment Vic. Say Frank: Come here Victor. The whole blooming district must have turned out to see the express go through. By Jove! what characters some of them seem. Look

at that young Wayback over there sporting the cigarette. It is like a daisy in a bull's mouth."

The individual indicated by the irrepressible Norman was a lanky, gawkish youth, whose loose limbs protruded out of an antediluvian jacket and nondescript unmentionables. The fellow was in a regular ecstasy of self-conceit. A mate had presented him with a cigarette. The moment he had duly lighted and placed the little fragrant weed in his marvellous orifice the transformation was ludicrous in the extreme. He puffed at a most astonishing rate, pushed his battered hat back on his skull, thrust his thumbs into his arm-pits, expanded his apology for a chest and looked condescendingly on the admiring urchins.

"Well if that does'nt beat everything!" Victor exclaimed. "Norman I would not have missed that chap for the world. He is superb."

"Looks like the living model of one of the 'Bulletin' caricatures" Frank laughed. "Glenrowan will be too small for that fellow after this. Should'nt be surprised if he had notions of a Parliamentary career soon.

Ere they had their belongings gathered together they had arrived at Wangaratta. They quickly

discerned George Harding on the platform, and were soon wringing his arms off.

"Hardy, you are a trump to meet us yourself," Norman exclaimed. "Now as soon as you say the word we are ready to drive off to "Mundoona" with you."

"Right Norman! But of course you must be dead beat. Come along to the Victoria, lads, and have some refreshments. It will be moonlight about ten, besides it will be very much cooler then and the 'drive will be more enjoyable."

"Very well George. Of course you are boss of the show while we are up here so we are agreeable to anything you suggest," Victor said.

The boys enjoyed the bustle of the thriving country town, the capital of the North-East. At the Victoria George had ordered a sumptuous repast for his freinds, and being hungry they thoroughly enjoyed the meal.

It was after ten when George drove round his buggy and pair to the front of the hotel. The lads got their luggage on board and then took their seats. George gave the spirited horses free rein. Away they dashed over the picturesque Ovens Bridge and down the sylvan road through the flats towards "Mundoona." The night was

cool and pleasant. The moon shone brightly and made silvery fretwork on the road where its rays gleamed through the leafy canopy of that part called the Avenue.

The high spirits of the boys had been further stimulated by the speed with which they had been whirled along, but here the spell of the bush, the mysterious, wondrous enchanting bush was around them and upon them. George checked the speed of his horses. The boys grew silent or spoke in low murmurs as they drank in the beauty of the fleeting scene with an exquisite realization of its loveliness. All the myriad sounds of half dormant and drowsy insect life buzzed and crooned around them a kind of low lullaby. A startled night owl flitted in unwieldy flight further back into the darkness of the wood. The barking of a farm-dog in the distance, but emphasised the stillness of the night. Away back in the forest the cry of the mopoke added just the last touch of wierdness to the scene and the hour.

Soon they drove out into the open road again.

A wave of delicious waltz-music, accompanied with the sounds of laughter and dancing feet was wafted towards them growing quickly more distinct as they drove up to a farm-house on the

road-side. An immense barn was illuminated and changed for the nonce into a ball room. The young people seen through the open doors were footing it right merrily.

"I say George, those folks are having a right jolly time in there," Norman exclaimed. "I feel I would like to halt and have a whirl myself."

"So would I, Norman, but never mind, you will have as much of that kind of thing as you like at "Mundoona." Pap likes a lot of young folks about him and we always have a round of festivities at Xmas time."

"It will be just the thing George, I am passionately fond of dancing, so is Frank, and even sober old Vic here likes an occasional caper."

The boys chatted merrily until they had arrived at the entrance to "Mundoona." A farm-hand opened wide the gates and they drove up the avenue to the house. "Mundoona" presented a fine outline against the moonlit sky. The visitors could discern that it was a commodious brick mansion with wide balconies and verandahs jutting out irregularly, but picturesquely in various wings and porches. A servant took charge of the horses. George escorted his friends to the hall

door where Mr and Mrs Harding and Violet were waiting to receive them.

“Welcome boys, welcome to ‘Mundoona.’ ” Mr. Harding greeted in such hearty tones of genuine welcome that there was no mistaking them. Mrs Harding’s and Violet’s greetings were none the less sincere. There was no awkward embarrassment. John Harding had a knack of making young people feel thoroughly at home. His wife was a kindred spirit, a woman who could always sympathise with the glowing enthusiasm of youth.

The family and their young guests sat out on the verandah until long after midnight. Mr Harding told the boys many an anecdote of daring and adventure in his young days. He had been born at “Mundoona,” and save the years spent at college all his life had been spent there. His father, an enterprising Englishman, had left him a fine property, and John Harding, by his own thrift and careful speculations, had more than trebled the fortune he had inherited.

“Of course lads, I need not tell you that this present house is not the original homestead. No, the old place where I was born was a weather-board house with no pretensions to style or elegance. Yet it was considered a mansion in those

days, and I can assure you I spent many happy years in the old home."

"Father will you not tell them all about the burning of the old place?" George queried tentatively.

"Ah George, you rascal! you want to draw your old Dad out, do you? Well lads the story must wait until to-morrow night. You must be very tired after your long journey, and ready to fall over with sleep."

"Oh no, by no means, Mr Harding!" The boys answered. "Do tell us the story" Frank added, "then we shall get to bed."

"Yes John! give them the story," Mrs Harding said laughingly, "I know you are just longing to tell of your exploits. Violet and I must get some coffee, so you can entertain the boys while we are away."

Mr Harding lit a fresh cigar. The boys drew their chairs closer to him. He blew a few whiffs in silence and then began.

"Well boys, you will not see one black fellow all over the whole North-East now, but when I was a boy they were numerous enough, though of course they were even then dying out very rapidly. Almost every year at about this time a tribe

used to camp down there on the river bend beyond the grove of pine trees. We could hear their hideous shouting up here as the gins and black fellows sang their wierd chant and danced their queer corroborees round the camp fire. My father was kinder to them than some of the other settlers round about, but they made him a bad return in the end. Sheep were frequently speared by them, but we took the loss of a few sheep as a matter of course during their visits to the bend. To come to my yarn. When I was a year older than George is now I came home from college on the holidays. It was this time of the year. One day I had been out rounding up cattle away up at Everton with Father and Jim Nolan. We got home about dusk. My sister (your Aunt Marion, George) and Ethel Sinclair, a friend of Marion's who was here on a visit, had gone for a drive that afternoon to Browning's, six miles further up the creek. Father and I sat out on the verandah smoking. Father was giving me instructions about my future duties on the station, when suddenly the quiet of the summer evening was disturbed by two piercing shrieks that seemed to come from the road near the avenue entrance.

The shrieks were followed by a chorus of demoniacal laughs and yells."

"Good God, Jack!" my father exclaimed "Those black devils have way-laid the girls." "Here stop" he commanded. "Run out to the stables and saddle two of the horses. Run as quickly as ever you can. I will get the pistols. Run, for God's sake."

"Quick as I was, Jim Nolan and Jack Archer, two of the stockmen who always lived at the station had anticipated me, and had saddled two of the horses. I mounted one, and led the other round to father. I secured a pistol which he hurriedly gave me and we both dashed madly down the Avenue. Down the road we could hear the blacks yelling round the buggy. We dashed up. My sister Marion was struggling with two devils, who were endeavouring to drag her from the buggy. She cried out when she saw us. "Oh Jack run for the love of Heaven and save Ethel, they have dragged her down there to that scrub near the bend." I called out to my Father to help Marion, and then leaped my horse over the fence towards the spot indicated. Two dusky savages were dragging the screaming girl towards the scrub uttering their wild yells all the while. I fir-

ed and shot one fellow in the head. He leaped into the air and fell dead. The other fellow seeing me coming raised his spear to kill the now senseless girl, but I fired again and shot him through the heart. I placed Miss Sinclair on in front of me and galloped back to the road. The savages had fled. Jim Nolan and Archer had come to my Father's rescue. Thank God we rescued the girls from death or worse."

Mrs Harding had stepped through the open dining-room window before her husband's story was ended. The boys noted how lovingly she placed her hand on Mr Harding's shoulder when he told of the rescue. His words consequently did not entirely surprise them when he said:—

"Boys the young lady I rescued from the savages that night you now see before you in my beloved wife."

"Come George, bring out the tray for me," Mrs Harding exclaimed, I think it's nicer to have supper out here."

"Yes lads!" Mr Harding continued, Ethel Sinclair and I loved one another from that night, so much so that she was not afraid to trust her life to my keeping when I asked her to be my wife, though I was not a Catholic then. Ah lads I

cannot tell you all I owe her, not the least the blessing of having been brought through her into the Catholic Church."

"But, Mr Harding, you have not told us how the old place was burnt down," Frank Coleman interjected.

"Well lads, that night, needless to say, we never closed an eye. We kept guard lest the black fellows should swarm the house and massacre us all, but strange to say they did not come near us. Next morning there were no traces of them. Two or three days later Father, Marion, Ethel and I went to a ball at Moyhu. When we returned our home was burnt to cinders. Two or three of the black fellows had hidden in the vicinity and kept watch on us. The previous evening Nolan and Archer were returning from an outlying paddock some miles from the homestead when they met three blacks, who were hurrying on towards the hills. They darted into the scrub when the men approached. You see boys they had their revenge, but we have never seen them about this district since then. Father built a comfortable brick residence which, as you can see by the nooks and wings, has been added to several times since."

Supper over. George showed the boys their rooms.

"Norman, you and Frank will sleep in this room. Victor will share mine with me. Should you prefer to sleep on the balcony you will find bunks out there."

"I say George," Victor exclaimed, when he and Harding had gone to their room, "Your Father is a trump. I do not wonder now at your choice, when you decide to remain at home and help him on the station."

Poor Victor realized that though his own home was more luxurious than "Mundoona," and though his mother was as gentle and loving as Mrs Harding, still his father's voluntary rejection of domestic joys caused a cloud over his own beautiful home.

CHAPTER IV.

Ernest Cosgrove.

The days at Mundoona passed quickly by. Mr. Harding a boy himself at heart spared no pains or trouble to give his young guests a delightful holiday. He of necessity had to deny himself a big share of the fun as he had his daily duties to attend to, the men to supervise, meetings to attend and all the other numerous cares of a squatter. His motto and its fulfilment had been the secret of his success hitherto: "Never entrust to another what you can well do yourself."

He gave George "carte-blanche" to invite his friends in the vicinity to a share in the merry-making. George was a capital organiser. There were long rides over the station, when he taught Victor, Norman and Frank, already capable horsemen to use the stock-whip and round up the wild cattle away in the distant runs. There were tennis matches and cricket, shooting and coursing, and on the Sunday after Mass a most enjoyable picnic on a lovely bit of green sward near

Eldorado. Every evening they had music, dancing and song, and "Mundoonna" re-echoed far into the night with the glad mirth of light young hearts.

Norman Marshall plunged into the gaiety with great zest. As if he wished to allow his mind no time to rest he never tired of merriment. When one round of pleasures was concluded he was eagerly planning another. John Harding enjoyed the young fellow's exuberant spirits, but his wife with a woman's keen instinct judged that all was not well with the lad, that there was some secret trouble which he was endeavouring to forget and conquer by continued gaiety.

One afternoon when the young people were enjoying themselves on the tennis courts away at the end of the lawn, Mr and Mrs Harding looking on from near the fountain that sent up a silvery spray into the round basin, Mr Harding remarked,

"Ethel! that Norman is a fascinating young fellow. I like Victor, he is a fine chap. He and George are inseparable, but Norman's madcap spirits make me like him the better of the two."

'Yes John! Norman is fascinating, but I am well pleased that our boy has singled out the more sober Victor as his best friend. Norman has I

think in his character the materials for greater things than ever Victor will achieve, but it strikes me that he may neglect to turn his talents to good account. I don't know why I think it John, but I am sure the lad is at present unhappy and is going against some inner voice that is calling him to higher things."

"Well, upon my word Ethel! I think you may be right. But listen to him now. Surely that merry laugh does not betoken any secret unhappiness. He and Frank are giving Victor and Cosgrove a beating and a lot of sauce into the bargain."

On the tennis court, Norman and Frank Coleman, were more than a match for Victor and Ernest Cosgrove, who were their opponents. Frank and Norman were splendid players, so too was Victor, but Cosgrove was only a beginner, and despite Victor's brilliant play he could not make up for his partner's lack of skill.

Ernest Cosgrove was one of the young fellows whom George invited to "Mundoona" to meet his college-mates, the Marshalls and Frank Coleman. From the very first he threw a spell over Norman, much to the disgust of Norman's bosom-friend

Frank, who conceived an instinctive dislike to the lad.

Cosgrove was handsome, clever and gentlemanly. To the ordinary observer his face was prepossessing, but there was a look in his eyes now and then and a curve about his lips that betokened a wilful passionate nature, a nature that would pause at nothing to gratify its desires. He had spent several years at one of the leading colleges in the city. He was a Protestant, the son of a wealthy doctor in a neighbouring town. At school he had been a brilliant success. He was now anticipating still brighter laurels at the University where he proposed to study for his father's profession. He was very accomplished, was a skilled musician and in addition possessed a fine tenor voice of unusual range and richness. But the fellow might have been a highly-civilized young pagan, for all he knew of or cared for religion. He was very witty and posed as a cynic. He sometimes amused his friends by clever imitations of the heavy discourses full of platitudes of the Protestant ministers whose churches in his native town he sometimes visited. He had read an enormous amount of atheistic and anti-Catholic literature and dropped inuendoes occasionally to

Norman about the Catholic clergy and their tyrannical sway over their people.

He was just the companion Norman sought in his present mood. Poor Norman, he was striving against his better desires, against his own convictions and persuasions. At a retreat at the college twelve months before Norman Marshall, brilliant, talented and popular, heard a distinct voice within him calling him to the religious life. In an ecstasy of bewilderment he consulted the Father who had conducted the exercises only to be told that in as far as he could judge God was calling him to the priesthood. Delighted at first, then rebellious and disgusted the young fellow kicked against the goad. He had always tried to hide away from himself the beauties of the religious life, and now when in spite of himself he realized that God wanted him he set his heart more obstinately than ever on the things he had elected for himself.

On the threshold of life with all the advantages of intellect, wealth and influence, the future opened up to his gaze in a vista of enchanting loveliness and bewitching success. He painted into the picture additional charms to add all the more fascination to the wordly life he would select, but all

the time a voice within him told him that neither pleasure nor love nor gratified ambition could satisfy him, that he was one of those called aside to the enjoyment of spiritual joys. In his anger he turned away and would not listen. He withstood his vocation. He did not receive the sacraments as frequently as his friends. He did his best in fact to smother the cravings in his soul for the things not of the world. Hence his exaggerated gaiety and his seeming absorption in pleasures that never brought any true joy to his aching heart.

Victor did not know what exactly was amiss with Norman though he divined that he was not himself and was in some way acting an unreal part.

Poor Norman had set himself such a grand ideal, In his schoolboy visions he foresaw his future brilliant and prosperous, an honour to the Church to which he belonged, doing great things for her as a Catholic layman, and consoling his mother by his own fidelity to that faith which her husband and his father had repudiated.

Ernest Cosgrove formed a fair estimate of the character of his new friend. He urged upon him while pretending sorrow at the facts some of the

apparent incongruities of the Catholic Faith. At school Cosgrove was noted by his companions as a boy whose conversation and general demeanour were lax and pernicious to the good morals of his associates.

While so far in his life nobody could impeach him with any serious misdemeanour, yet there was a something about him, a vague intangible suggestiveness in conversation and manners that never made for higher tendencies and loftier ideals in his companions and friends.

He knew that at present at least so pure and manly was Norman, so filled with horror for anything that was low or dishonourable, that any premature manifestation of Cosgrove's own real character and corrupt tendencies would mean an abrupt and final severance of their friendship. So he determined to bide his time.

There was no young fellow who had ever fascinated him so much as Norman Marshall. He determined he would make him his friend, but Cosgrove was one of those devils in human form, alas so often met with in our public schools, who when they meet a friend who attracts them by superior nobility of character, instead of raising themselves to the standard of such an acquaint-

ance and so compelling friendship, seek rather to drag them down to their own sordid level, and thus equals in meanness be bound by bonds of fellowship.

"I cannot understand Father" he said to his parent a few days later, "how it is that such a sensible intelligent man as Judge Marshall could have allowed his children to be brought up such slaves to the superstitions of the Catholic Faith. Norman would be such a fine fellow if he were not so uncompromising a Catholic."

"They ought to thank God Ernest that they have a good mother who has instilled these religious principles into them. Would to God that you were like them I would be well pleased to see you one of those Catholics for whom you have so much contempt. I fear at present you are absolutely godless."

Doctor Cosgrove's voice showed the pain he felt but Ernest laughed in ridicule and retorted rather insolently.

"Well! Father, you certainly are not a bigoted Christian and do not set me much example as regards Church-going."

"I would rather not discuss the matter with you Ernest and I would wish you my boy to re-

member that I am at all events your father and you should not speak to me so disrespectfully."

The hopeful son did not even make an attempt to apologise, but whistling a music-hall air sauntered leisurely out of the room.

Doctor Cosgrove bowed his head on his hands. His musings were bitter indeed. In his young days he had married a beautiful Sydney girl, but alas! as vain and selfish as she was lovely. The marriage proved a disastrous failure. The doctor had been wild before his marriage, but he had good principles and hoped his marriage would be the beginning of a new life. He had sown his wild oats and earnestly resolved to cut old acquaintances, leave off old haunts and so begin a new life of moral integrity. Alas for his hopes and good resolutions. His wife proved a regular butterfly, with no interest in her husband and home, flying from one pleasure to another, recklessly extravagant and laughing to scorn her husband's remonstrances.

The end was a divorce. Doctor Cosgrove had become a soured misanthrope. Until recent years he had taken very little interest in his son, he had sent him to school when he was but a child and thus shirked as far as possible the responsibility of his up-bringing. Living but for his pro-

fession the years had passed quickly. It was not until Ernest's return from college a few weeks before, that the father realized that Ernest was almost a man, with all his father's intellectual gifts and all his mother's vicious propensities.

The revelation of his son's callous scoffing nature came as a shock to the father. But had he not been culpably blind he might have long ago seen shocking signs and proofs of his boy's evil disposition. The servants could long ago have revealed many things, but the Doctor had given them strict orders never to worry him with any tales or complaints.

"Good God!" the Doctor groaned, "What a mistake my marriage was. How cursed I was in not having married a good religious woman. I myself have been most careless and neglectful in regard to my son. My punishment is that he despises me and has already lost sight of all that is good and noble in man."

Ah! what evils accrue from marriages made in haste without God's all-holy blessing on them. What inducements to wrong and incentives to sin when ties the most hallowed on earth are severed and vows the most solemn uttered by man's lips are broken and their violation legally sanctioned by iniquitous divorce laws.

CHAPTER V.

Cosgrove Swears Revenge.

The round of pleasures, the week spent in the happy homely surroundings at "Mundoona," would have put in abeyance altogether what the boys had looked forward to as the crowning joy of their holidays, were it not for the instinctive repulsion experienced by both Victor and Frank towards Ernest Cosgrove.

One day after lunch, George, Victor and Frank were resting on the lawn under the shade of a wide-spreading beech.

"I say George," Victor queried "What do you think of that fellow Ernest Cosgrove? I can't stand him. I cannot say definitely what I do not like about him but I decidedly do not like him."

"Just my feelings Victor," Frank exclaimed. "The fellow is too smooth and condescendingly courteous for my taste, clever as he is a sneer now and then discloses something hidden behind his affability. But lads I have something more to go on than a mere undefinable dislike. He and I

were in the billiard-room the other night. One of the maids came in on a message from your mother. Cosgrove made a remark that proclaimed him to me as a blackguard. I told him what I thought of him, and the fellow sniggered something about my Catholic hypocrisy. By Heavens! George were it not in deference to your father whose guests we are, I would have thrashed the cad unmercifully."

"I can assure you, Frank, there is no love lost between Cosgrove and me," George assured them. "The fellow is so conceited that he thinks of and considers nobody but himself. I do not like seeing Norman and him so much together, and I can assure you now after what you have mentioned Frank that he will never again visit here."

"I can't imagine what Norman sees in him," Victor resumed in a tone of annoyance. "The worst of it is that the acquaintance will be renewed at the University next year."

"I say lads," George exclaimed, "You seem to have forgotten that Buffalo trip altogether, what do you say to our setting out to-morrow? We can get our traps ready this evening, wire to Crawford's people to expect us and set out to-morrow by the Bright train. I need hardly tell

you no invitation will be extended to Cosgrove. Once Norman is up on the mountains he will forget him altogether."

"Hurrah! old George. You are always the king of trumps," Victor exclaimed, while Frank tossed his hat high in the air with sheer delight.

"Come on boys, I must tell mother we are off to-morrow. Father went in to town this morning and will not be back before night. We will drive in ourselves now, wire to the Hospice people and make all things square for to-morrow night. The ideal way to do the Buffalo would be to take our own tent and provisions, but the climate up there is an unknown quantity. Living in a tent is just the thing in good weather, but should the days turn out wet there would be very little fun."

George told his mother of their intended mountain trip and of their reasons for this sudden decision. She, wise lady that she was, saw the wisdom of removing Norman from Ernest Cosgrove's doubtful influence.

The boys set out for Wangaratta. Half an hour after they had left, Norman and Ernest Cosgrove returned from their ride. Mrs Harding announced to them the boys' intentions for the morrow.

"Oh Mrs Harding, this is just glorious news,"

Norman exclaimed, "I am delighted we shall have such a jolly time up there among those grand old mountains."

Ernest Cosgrove bit his lip in vexation, "This is a rather sudden arrangement Norman," he said brusquely. "Well I suppose as George is the organiser of this Alpine expedition and has mentioned nothing of the matter to me, I am not to be one of the select party, so I am off home."

Mrs Harding knew that it was to shirk his society that the boys had arranged their trip so expeditiously. Hence she made no comment on his having been overlooked, but genuine lady that she was invited him to remain until the next day.

Cosgrove declined, but by no means graciously. His chagrin at the evident rebuff to him on George's part was too great to be concealed neath the thin veneer of courtesy he usually affected. With a hurried good-bye to Mrs. Harding and Norman he rode away. His face was not pleasant to see as through clenched teeth he hissed, "So Victor Marshall thinks I am likely to spoil a Papist in his brother. Curse him and that Irish fellow Coleman. Well Norman and I shall renew acquaintance at the University and I am mistaken if I do not gain an influence over him, and lead

him on to something that will make his pious friends lament they had slighted me."

Norman breathed a sigh of relief as he watched his friend of the last few days ride quickly down the avenue. He knew in his heart that Ernest was not his "beau-ideal" of a friend, that his life could not be said to be 'sans peur et sans reproche.' That very morning Cosgrove had come out of his shell, had dropped the mask and evidenced by some expressions and opinions the rank licentiousness of his principles and his shocking code of morals. Norman had ascertained the "laissez-faire" policy of Doctor Cosgrove in the up-bringing of his son and the Neronic result of such a training, the soul barren of virtue and generosity, the untamed libertine nature hidden under the cloak of the acquired accomplishments of a young gentleman of the world.

So startling was the revelation that Norman was shocked and horrified. A few months back the discovery of such characteristics in a new acquaintance would have resulted in the severance of all relations between Norman and him. But our young friend had been sinning against the light, had been fighting against grace, and now the sudden "denouement" of Cosgrove's character though

it repelled him exceedingly was not effective in causing him to resolve to cut his company absolutely in future.

The brilliancy of Cosgrove's attainments, his accomplishments and graceful manners had already thrown a spell over Norman. Hence he was glad that his brother and friends had stepped in and "bon gre malgre" terminated for the present at least all intercourse between him and the young exquisite. But Victor and his friends had made a serious mistake when they imagined that this sudden excursion to the mountains would give the "coup de grace" to friendly relations between Norman and Ernest Cosgrove.

Judge Marshall arrived unexpectedly that evening. He drove out from the town with Mr Harding. He had come up anticipating some very good shooting with his friend and a few other cronies in the neighbourhood.

Of course our young friends could think or talk of nothing else but their trip on the morrow. Violet and Mrs Harding assisted them with their packing while the Judge and John Harding smoked on the verandah.

"Well Harding, can we not make up a party and have a crack at the duck somewhere to-morrow?

After the heat and bustle of town I am longing for a good walk after the game," the Judge queried.

"Not to-morrow, Judge," John Harding answered. "You must content yourself with a shot at the rabbits for the next few days. Mitchell and Reid are away in Sydney and will not be back until Saturday. We can't go on Sunday as I must go to Mass, besides I promised Ethel I would go to the altar that morning in order to make a good beginning for the New Year."

"Good gracious! Harding," the Judge exclaimed in incredulous tones, "Surely you would not set aside a day's sport for such nonsense. Mass! Confession! What a ridiculous absurdity!"

"Marshall, I cannot listen to you speak in this fashion," We have been friends for years Harry and you are my guest just now, but let me tell you I can allow no man speak in my presence of my Church and its sacred things in the tone you adopt. I was a Protestant once and had been taught at school many foul calumnies against the Catholic Faith. I became a Catholic after my marriage, not to please my wife but because her sweet pure life and her love for her faith made me think that the religion which made her what she

was must be divine. I was instructed and became a Catholic from conviction. I thank God for the blessing of the Catholic Faith, and Judge Marshall let me tell you what I have never presumed to say to you before, I cannot understand how one brought up and instructed as you were could cease to be a practical Catholic."

"Oh Jack! I meant no offence old man. There is no need to take so serious a view of my words. But surely you are not so abandoned a sinner" the Judge continued with a sneer, "that you must as if it were a matter of life and death rush to Confession next Sunday. I admit I have not been to Confession for years, still I am not a bit uneasy, "Entre nous" Jack I know of nothing with which to impeach myself. I flatter myself I do no harm to any man."

"Ah indeed Judge! Well my friend I feel sure you would cry "pourquoi"? did you hear that you were deemed worthy of sympathy, but I assure you I pity you very much. Mine may be a peculiar temperament, but I admit frankly that I find myself going backwards when I remain away from the sacraments a considerable time. On the other hand the more frequently I receive them the better do I live and the easier do I resist old bad

habits. I must say in regard to your boast that you are conscious of no sin that I pity you."

"Please explain, Jack," the Judge asked in an amused tone.

"Well sir, in my esteem there are only two classes of people who do not sin in some way. Those who have not come to the use of reason, and those who have lost their reason. Imbeciles in fact."

"Come John! You are coming out rather strong, but really my dear fellow you do not hurt me. I still am a Christian, and I hold that one religion within Catholicity is as good as another."

"Marshall, for Heaven's sake do not ask me to believe that this is your conviction. I can admire a genuine Anglican or Presbyterian or Methodist, but with an Indifferentist I can have no patience. Why man there are so many positive contradictions in the different systems or churches that some of their tenets must 'prima facie' be false. I am not as erudite a philosopher as you, but it is the very first principle of philosophy and common sense, that two contradictory statements cannot both be true at the same time. Why Judge your position leads you to the impious conclusion that falsehood is as good as truth."

“How do you make this out Harding”?

“Well Judge, I am not very well versed in the conflicting beliefs of the various sects, but I remember a few doctrines at all events. Anglicans believe Christ is a divine person, according to Unitarians Christ is a mere man. Lutherans believe infant baptism is valid, Baptists reject it as invalid. We Catholics hold that Bishops were divinely instituted to guide the Church, Presbyterians reject this doctrine. There are ever so many other absolutely contradictory beliefs, and yet you, once a Catholic, state that one religion is as good as another. Ah Harry my friend, I will tell you plainly what I think; you are either going against your convictions, or you have lost all faith.”

“Look here Harding, I know your esteem and friendship for me but I must say I would not stand those words from any other. However John I did not come up here to enter into a theological dispute. We can always be friends no matter what our beliefs.”

“That’s so Harry,” Mr Harding answered earnestly. “However, Judge I beg of you not to interfere with me in the performance of my religious duties. Some of my best friends are non-Catholics

and I know they always respect my beliefs and never interfere as regards my faith."

Mrs Harding, Violet and the boys joined the gentlemen at this juncture. The conversation soon drifted into lighter channels. The lads eagerly discussed their trip to the mountains and listened attentively to Judge Marshall's reminiscences of a holiday in Switzerland among the snow-clad Alps.



CHAPTER VI.

Off for the Mountains-- A Typical Jehu

Four eager boys alighted from the Bright train at Porepunkah on the next day.

Everybody who has travelled by the slow, jogging train that conveys passengers to the picturesque little town 'mong the mountains, knows how tedious the journey is. Haltings at little wayside stations, with names decidedly native, and sometimes more lengthy than euphonic. The delays are exasperating, the heat becomes almost intolerable as the hot sun strikes down on the roofs of the cars standing stationary. If there is anything that compensates at all for discomfort and sweltering heat, and beguiles the time, it is the torrent of vituperation poured on the guard, who is porter and guard in one, by the station-mistresses not masters; for the magnates at each wayside place along this line, are able-bodied Australians of the feminine gender. Certainly Biddy Moriarty, of Dublin notoriety did not excel these worthy officials in petticoats, in strong rhetoric; and the

good-humoured witty guard's sallies and replies are almost as clever, certainly as disconcerting, as the geometrical language used by the Immortal Dan in routing the aforesaid Amazon.

But even these reiterated philippics soon grow monotonous, and pall on one. Even the very brightest are apt to be tired and depressed, after two hours of a trip of this kind; but the spirits of youth are elastic. At all events, when George Harding, Vic. and Norman Marshall, and Frank Coleman got off the old slow-coach train at Porepunkah, they seemed as fresh and light-spirited, as if they had just left one of the luxurious compartments of the Sydney Express.

They collected their luggage, and looked round to see if there were somebody to convey them to their destination. A cheery red-faced individual in a wide sombrero hat greeted them.

"Are yez the young gents whom Mr Canning expects up at the 'Ospice? Mr Harding and his mates?"

"We are the chaps," George answered.

"Right ye are sonny! Now give me your luggage, I will fix you up in double quick time."

Having escorted them to the coach, Mick Doherty, for this was the jovial jehu's name, stowed the

luggage on board. Having secured everything he jumped up to his seat and directed his passengers.

“Now me lads, we’ve got no more passengers to-day, so two of you can sit up here with me. The other two can have the whole run of the interior.”

Victor and George scrambled up in front, Norman and Frank got inside the coach.

“All right there me hearties! Right! Off we go. Woa there Carbine! Steady Poseidon! Git up you brutes.”

With a loud whoop, and a series of sharp resounding cracks of his long whip, Mick gave the reins to his four steeds. The lads had not been five minutes in the coach, when they were in fits of laughter at his side-splitting yarns and his witty rejoinders. This same Mick was a veteran driver for Crawford and Co. and had driven coaches all over the North-East. He was well known all over Victoria. It is but twelve months ago, that the writer of this story with some friends, admired his expert driving and comical yarns, on the occasion of a memorable trip to Mount Buffalo. On this occasion a very stout, sour-tempered lady was one of the passengers. She had secured the place of honour on the coach. But she was not an appreciative

neighbour. All Mick's yarns were lost on her. She did not even vouchsafe a smile. However the irrepressible Doherty was nothing daunted, he simply ignored her and addressed all his remarks to the writer, and a clerical friend who were the remaining occupants of the front seat. In describing a very cold night some weeks previously on the mountains, he was at a loss for a while to what to compare it. Then he exclaimed:

"Begobs your Reverence, it was as cold and as frosty as this madam here on my left."

The lady rebuked him for his impertinence.

Mick gazed at her open-mouthed and said:

"Begobs Madam! You nearly knocked me off my seat that time, I really thought you were deaf and dumb."

This little sally must have thawed the lady somewhat, for a few moments later she condescended to ask a question:

"Driver! Is that our road up there?" pointing to where the road wound in tortuous windings on the heights above.

"No Mum: it's not. It belongs to the Government, Mick answered without a smile. But the answer elicited more than a smile from the other

passengers, who could not refrain from a hearty laugh at the facetious reply.

Our young friends soon reached the end of their coach-drive, at a spot where they were met by an elderly man and a boy in charge of five ponies. Both these individuals were attired in shabby tweed suits, that had seen much service. They were both weatherbeaten and bronzed, typical mountaineers in fact.

“Good-day, Canning! Hello Bill! In good time I see,” Mick saluted. “Here be the young gents you are expectin’, and if they don’t keep you alive up there for the next few weeks, my name ain’t Mick. They are real blue bloods Dave,” he added in an aside, “None of your snobbish, draper’s-clerk type. See I had these few buttons showing four half-crown pieces “from them just now to drink their ’ealths.”

“Here, Master Marshall! Here, young gentlemen!” he called to the boys who were busy getting their luggage off the coach. “Leave all that to me lads. Come here until I introduce you to Dave Canning, the King of the Buffalo. He’s been up there since the Flood, and is as tough as leather as you can see by his hide. Now I warn you,

do not believe one word he tells you, as he is the biggest liar out of hell."

The old mountaineer laughed heartily, as he shook hands with the boys.

"Eh! Listen to him gentlemen," he exclaimed, "That's as big a lie as he could tell. Why when a cove round here draws the long bow, and has a good imagination, we say of him, that he beats the devil and Mick Doherty."

"Don't mind him boys, don't mind him," Mick laughed. "When Dave dies I may aspire to his position, but while he lives I must be content to play second fiddle."

The boys had some luncheon before they resumed their journey. They had brought a basket from "Mundoona." Mick, an expert at making billy-tea, quickly kindled a fire, and soon the lads were enjoying a cup of tea, which they pronounced far superior to anything they had ever tasted. When they had finished their "al fresco" repast, Mick bade them good-bye.

"Be sure Mick," Norman insisted "that you come for us when we are leaving. You must drive us to Bright, and give us some more of your yarns."

"All right, sonny! I won't fail, I wish I were go-

ing up there with you lads; but you will have a real jolly guide in Dave Canning.

Mick jumped on to his seat again, cracked his whip, cried out to his horses, and was off for the road once again, the lads and Dave Canning giving him three ringing cheers.

“Well now, young gents, I reckon we had better begin our climb. It will take us two and a half hours to get up to the 'Ospice. I guess none of you are nervous; but I want to tell you to give your ponies their heads when you come to any dangerous parts. They are perfectly trained; if you let them go their own road, you will be all serene.”

“Right O! Mr Canning,” George answered, we are all good horsemen here, so lead away and we shall follow.”

“Very well sonny! I must get your luggage on this pack-horse. Then I'll lead and you follow. Here and there we go over level bits of ground, so you can have an occasional canter if you wish.”

The boys mounted their sagacious little horses and followed their guide. The pack-horse came jogging on behind. The bridle-path by which tourists ascended Mount Buffalo, before the Government road was opened up, will be remembered

by those who ever journeyed along it, with pleasure. Tortuous and steep it runs along through giant gum trees and umbrageous ferns, winding ever higher, sometimes over green grassy levels, past babbling crystal brooks; sometimes along the sides of dizzy precipices. A veritable chaos of rocky boulders and gnarled trees down beneath, and walls of rugged granite rising abruptly up above. The ponies sometimes scrambled over sheets of slimy rock, where the rider expected they would slip at every step, and where one false step or wrong turn meant an awful plunge for mount and rider into ruinous space.

But this element of danger only gave all the more zest to the exquisite pleasure of the ride, for those who were not nervous. One very soon learned to place absolute trust in the sturdy sure-footed little beasts; then the exhilarating air perfumed with mountain flowers and the pungent refreshing odour of eucalyptus, so cool, so refreshing, growing ever more delightfully so, as the path wound higher and higher, and one got further away from the stifling heat of the plains.

The boys could scarce contain their joy. Dave Canning certainly never escorted a gayer party. Whenever they came to a level stretch of sward,

Norman with a shout would gallop his pony over the turf, and the others with whoops and laughter followed suit.

The ever-varying scenes and views were absolutely enchanting.

When but a few miles from the summit, Dave called a halt, and invited them to drink from a brook flowing near by.

The lads alighted, drank the cool waters, and drew in long breaths of the ambrosial air.

"Oh lads! Isn't it heavenly?" Victor exclaimed. "Frank look at that lovely view down there, and the gleaming of the falls at Eurobin. I guess after this, you will admit there is scenery worth looking at outside the Emerald Isle."

"Yes Victor! This is magnificent," Frank exclaimed.

The young fellow gazed and grew sad. A mist of emotion dimmed his eyes.

"Oh lads, this scene though so different reminds me of the view from my own old Kerry mountains. God help me! I wonder shall I ever look down from their rugged heights again?"

"Of course you will, Frank, old man," Norman exclaimed, as he placed his hand on his friend's shoulder, "Of course you will. You and I must

see the Old Land together, and you will show me all it's beauty spots."

Poor Frank! His friends knew how he loved Ireland. The memories now stirred up of old scenes and lost friends were sad ones. His mother died when his only sister Eileen was an infant. Two years ago, his father Doctor Coleman died of a fever, contracted while attending a patient. The children were left penniless. Frank's uncle, Father Edward Coleman brought him out to Victoria. Eileen was adopted by another uncle, a wealthy merchant in New York. The parting between brother and sister was heart-rending. Over and over again, the little Irish girl made her idolized brother promise he would come to her, when he would have earned independence in Australia. The kind friends who had cared for the children since their father's death, drew them gently apart. Frank was led away to the tender, that had brought them out from the shore. A few days later he himself sailed for Melbourne. His uncle gave him a genuine welcome, and sent him after a few weeks to Xavier College, where he became the bosom friend of George Harding and the young Marshalls. Two years had passed since the brother and sister had parted. Frank received frequent letters from Eileen

She was very happy with her bachelor uncle, who idolized her, and treated her as his own child; but her heart still longed for her brother; and Frank looked forward eagerly to the time when he should be able to go to her.

Frank's reverie was interrupted by a call from old Canning to remount. A little more stiff climbing, and Dave called a halt to exhibit to them, what he termed his winter stables. The boys were reminded of Robinson Crusoe's cave. The building, if it could be dignified by such a name, was a cave hollowed out of the rock, and walled in by a wall of logs, with a wide door, and an apology for a window. Mr Canning explained to the lads, that in winter-time the snow prevented his bringing his horses right on to the Hospice, so his guests had to wade through the snow, from the Winter Stables to his residence.

Another ride brought them to the crest of the mountain. Here a cry of surprise burst from their lips. Right up on the top of the mountain, enclosed by wood-clad ridges, was a green level, with a silvery stream winding its way through it mid rock and heather. Tucked in cosily 'gainst the side of one of the encircling hills, they beheld the white Hospice. It was altogether so different to

what they expected, that they could not find words for their astonishment.

"Now then young gents," Mr Canning exclaimed: "Yonder is my castle on the mountains. I can smell dinner even at this distance. Let me see which of you shall arrive at the 'Ospice first."

The boys needed no further coaxing. A race over this green valley was just the climax of the day's pleasure. Away they galloped, their sturdy ponies just as anxious as they were to reach their destination. But the valley was not as innocent as it looked. There were bog-holes and fens innumerable hidden neath the rich rank grass. Norman's mount came on one of these, and jumped the obstacle when the rider was not expecting a leap; with the result that poor Norman met a sudden surprise, sitting in a very undignified posture on the green grass, his pony evidently glad to be rid of the encumbrance, kicking up his heels most energetically in his career towards home.

Norman picked himself up, none the worse for his fall, and laughingly vowed vengeance on his companions, as they convulsed with mirth at his disaster galloped by.

Mrs. Canning accorded them a right cheery welcome. Dave escorted them to a bathing-hole down the stream where the clear cool waters of the

mountain brook, always replenish the wide basin of rock they had hollowed out. The plunge in the cool waters gave further zest to their appetites. Their hostess was delighted at their prowess at the table.

"Well George!" Norman exclaimed, I guess we've done enough for one day, and as you are the leader I shall be glad if you suggest bed. I feel very tired."

"I think it's ditto with all of us Normy," George replied, "You get to your bunks lads. I must ask Dave to call us in the morning, before sunrise. Father was up here last year, he has been raving ever since about the dawn on the Buffalo. His description has made me long to see it. What say you Frank, do you think we had better see it to-morrow morning or have a long sleep and wait until later?"

"Oh Hardy to-morrow by all means! Why it's only half-past nine now, we shall have slept enough before sunrise."

Victor and Norman acquiesced likewise, so George went out to instruct Dave to call them in time. Very soon our young friends were sound asleep. The day had been keenly enjoyed by them and was full of promise for a glad morrow.

CHAPTER VII.

Dawn on the Buffalo—Norman's Trouble

George and Victor had a confused idea that the house was falling to pieces about them, when Mr. Canning endeavoured to rouse them up. But when Victor was gripped by the nose by a rough hand, he began to think that what he thought a dream was stern reality. He jumped up to find Dave Canning with a lighted candle in his hand, indulging in a hearty laugh at his expense.

"Say young gents! I thought you wanted to see the sun rise. Well, I have been hammering at your door for the last ten minutes, and when I could get no move out of you, I thought I had better come in and see if you were alive."

"Ha-ha-ha. By Jove! We must have been sound asleep. All right, Dave, we are wide awake now," George said as he hastily got out of bed. "Go and shake up Norman and Frank. We shall be ready in five minutes."

Ten minutes later, the Inseparables were following their guide along the track to the Gorge. They

kept along the right hand side of the stream, and climbed up to the highest point overlooking the Gorge. They did not have long to wait, and then they beheld as wondrously grand a sight as any man can well behold. It had been dark when they set out. The lantern their guide bore had lit up only very indistinctly huge boulders of rock, as the boys scrambled on. Now a rosy light appeared over the distant hills. It gradually grew a brighter, lovelier tint, tinging the clouds with fairy tints of purple. Soon, the bold rugged outlines of the steep sides of the George were lit up. Mammoth rocks, gnarled trees, and the mighty Gorge itself, an awful evidence of primeval Titanic forces, all loomed out, their vastness emphasised, yet softened by the lovely roseate light. Down in the valleys a thick mist obscured all the nether world. There seemed absence of entity, chaos in fact. One could realize the coming of the Eternal Creator at the beginning of the world's history when He thundered forth His fiat, and mountain and valley and rolling ocean were evolved from pristine nothingness. Anon the purple robes were tinged with gold, where the crests of the far away mountains and the morning fleecy clouds caught the full light of the day-star. Soon the whole

surrounding panorama of hills and mountains was clothed in golden light. White fleecy clouds in fantastic shapes, some like snowy cherubs with wings outspread, the cohorts of the sun, marshalled themselves round the horizon, a guard of honour at the advent of the new-born day. The grey mists from the valley beneath rolled back to the distant hills, dispersing themselves in serpentine coils of golden-grey vapour, and beauteous nature unveiled herself to the fertilizing embraces of the risen sun.

“Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei,” Victor exclaimed in hushed tones, when he had revelled in the beauty of the scene. “Oh lads this is magnificent.”

“What must heaven be like boys when earth is so lovely,” Frank interposed. “Such a riot of richest colouring I have never beheld. Surely this is a glance beyond the golden gates, vouchsafed by the King of Heaven to those who rise from slumber, and come up here to this beautiful temple of Nature.”

“Well I reckon,” the prosaic George exclaimed : “Williamson’s stage effects are pretty flat compared with what we have just seen.”

Norman remained silent. His soul seemed to triumph in ecstatic transport, at this heavenly vision of the dawn on the mountains. The Buffalo

was to him then another Sinai, so close did he feel the Great Presence of the Almighty Creator, and so distinctly did he hear His voice thrilling through his soul, commanding him to rise above all merely worldly things : ambition, fame, pleasure, and to follow God's call. He felt at the time that he could renounce everything and live only for the Eternal God, imaged in the loveliness he had just beheld, but suddenly a vision of his new-found friend Ernest Cosgrove crossed his mind, subtle, sensuous, alluring. It was the serpent writhing across his brief Eden. He turned his gaze from the glory of the aurora to the valleys and hamlets below, all his ambitious desires, rebellious thoughts thronged back in strong muster, and he shut his heart 'gainst the morning glory and the morning grace. His careless remark to his companions little betrayed first the ecstasy, then the storm that succeeded it in his soul.

"Well lads this is beautiful. I would sacrifice a whole night's sleep, to witness such another sunrise."

The boys now studied the surrounding scenes in detail. They crept cautiously out to the edge of the rocky precipice on which they stood and looked down. The bottom of the abyss was thousands of

feet beneath them. The sides of the gorge rose rugged and rocky and bare, save where some hardy saplings, and venturesome vegetation, clad the grotesque forms of the Cyclopean rocks. A wooded hill of considerable height lay so far beneath, that it seemed a sombre plain. Out beyond it the farms in their summer's golden hue, the the homesteads and farm-houses from which tiny spirals of smoke ascended, the winding roads, the townships of Bright and Wandiligong, the distant chain of blue mountains, all these combined formed the most beautiful picture some of them had ever gazed upon. The stream in which they had bathed the previous evening, tumbled headlong over the Gorge. It's roaring and rushing made the music of a solemn matin hymn, to the Giver of this new day.

Our young friends were enchanted. They reluctantly left the Gorge. After a plunge in the cool waters of the natural basin they returned to the Hospice, and enjoyed a hearty breakfast.

The fortnight up the mountains passed quickly by. The young explorers utilized every hour of day-light available. They climbed the highest peak of the Buffalo range: The Horn. They rode through thick woods, up steep mountain-sides

away out to Clear Peak. They feasted their eyes on ever varying views and landscapes, from different coigns of vantage. Old Canning was always their guide. The young fellows were intensely amused at the names—Scriptural, historical and mythical he bestowed on large boulders or fantastic groupings of gigantic rocks. The names were indeed sometimes ingenious enough, for there was a striking resemblance to the individuals or the places whose names he borrowed. But more frequently it required a very strong imagination indeed to discover any likeness whatsoever or any reasons for his ridiculous nomenclature.

On their way to the Horn, Canning called a halt and requested them to turn their attention to a huge rock, bearing a grotesque resemblance to a human being.

Old Canning was a very pious Wesleyan, though by no means a bigoted one. His idea of the Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church must have been derived from a fanatical utterance of some Dill Mackay or other irreverend firebrand. His remark certainly did not bear evidence that he associated much dignity with the Holy Father.

“Well gents! I want you to tell me if I haven’t found a grand name for that bloke,” he exclaimed

when he had pointed out the fantastic block of granite. "I call him the Pope of Rome. There is his crown, and his long gown, and his sceptre."

The boys burst into a peal of half-amused half-indignant laughter.

"Dave, Dave!" Frank exclaimed, "We have swallowed a lot of your names without a murmur, though some of them were pretty strong doses. But I'm blessed, if you can make us pretend we see any resemblance between yon twisted mass of stone and our Holy Father. Ugh! man, have you ever seen a picture of His Holiness? If you did it must have been a Twelfth of July caricature. It's no more like the Pope than you are, and not even a lunatic would suggest this last resemblance."

"Bravo, Frank!" George exclaimed laughingly. "It's a treat to hear you when you let off steam. Dave I would advise you re-christen your Cyclops."

"Oh Dave, I did not mean to offend you ;" Frank exclaimed, "but really I must protest against the name you have given that rock."

"Don't apologise my son," old Canning exclaimed good-humouredly, "but I thought my name was a good one. Say Master Norman, I will ask you to be god-father and suggest a name for the fellow."

"Right you are Dave," Norman heartily assented. "I reckon lads, yonder rock looks ridiculously like a Chinese mandarin, a bit rakish no doubt, but we can imagine the old Celestial is staggering home after an opium blow-out."

The resemblance was so palpable that the lads cheered Norman vociferously. Even old Canning acknowledged the meetness of the name.

"By Jove! Norman, you are a genius," Victor exclaimed. "That fellow has Chou branded all over him. I bet when we get round the corner, we shall see his pig-tail sticking out."

"Right then lads," Canning agreed. "The mandarin it shall be, and I will enter Norman Marshall in the register, as the god-father."

The evenings after tea were spent down on the brink of the Gorge. There in the silvery moonlight, gazing at the light far down in the valley beneath, or up at the weird masses of cloud, mazes of enchanting beauty, as the moon glided neath them and silvered their drifting fringes.

Reclining on the heather or seated on the rocks the boys felt the spell of God's "eternal hills" upon them. The only beings up here they became more to one another, and exchanged confidences

and disclosed feelings that had been locked up in the hearts of each.

On their last evening on the mount, Frank and Norman strolled down to the Gorge together. Victor and George remained behind to write some letters, they promised to join their friends later on.

“Frank it will be a jolly shame when this place is made a regular pleasure resort,” Norman was saying. “Old Canning tells me the surveyors are already at work. He says the Government is considering the feasibility of building an immense chalet up here and opening up a coach road right to the summit. I think this place will lose half its charm when you meet holiday-makers round every crag and rock.”

“Yes Norman!” Frank answered, “I quite agree with you. I feel lonely at the thought of our leaving Mount Buffalo to-morrow. Somehow up here, while I have enjoyed myself thoroughly, I have found myself holier and better. Sometimes I feel so near to God, that I fancy I am in a Church in the Divine Presence.”

Strange Frank! that I have experienced the very same feeling. I wonder is God really speaking to our souls sometimes when we think we hear Him,

or is it only the fancy of a fervid imagination, or the result of temperament? At present I am tortured by the conviction that God wishes me to do something that is altogether repugnant to me. I must tell you that as a consequence I feel very miserable.

Frank turned and looked in silence at his friend. Then he said.

“Ah Norman! I thought in spite of your seeming gaiety that there was something troubling you. If I am not asking too much, I would beg of you to tell me what your trouble really is.”

“Well Frank I will tell you, but you must keep the matter a strict secret even from Victor and George. Some time back a conviction suddenly forced itself on me that God wishes me to become a priest. At first I was awed and glad in a strange sense. I have an exalted idea of the priesthood. Then I pondered on the sacrifice I should make, the self-denial required in such a holy state, and I was filled with revulsion. I spoke to Father Bennet at our last Retreat, then to my confessor. Both bade me be very careful and to pray for further light. Father Bennet reproved me very severely when I informed him I not only fought against the conviction, but expressly strove to excite loathing

towards all it means. Ever since I cannot pray as I used to. I derive very little comfort or profit from the sacraments. I am cold and distracted. Oh but Frank, surely it is only imagination. I am not called to be a priest. No! No!"

The young fellow's face grew white and tense. His eyes burned with excitement. He stood up and walked over towards the cataract. Frank arose and followed him.

"Why should I be called?" Norman continued. I am ambitious. I like pleasure. I love my parents, sister and friends too strongly to be able to acquire that great unearthly love I should require. No! It is impossible."

"Norman old man! you are exciting yourself unnecessarily," Frank exclaimed as he took his friend's hand. "I am goodness knows a poor adviser in such matters, but Normy I would not fight against this conviction, as you call it, if I were you. I am sure if God wants you to be a priest, He will give you all the graces the holy state requires and Norman for God's sake do not become wilfully lax in order to stifle this feeling of yours. I know if I had such a call, I would abandon everything to pursue it. I would give up your friendship and the lads' and my sister Eileen's love."

“I shall try to follow your advice Frank. I am so glad I confided in you, I feel easier and happier for it. At all events I will go to the University when the term begins, and if after a year or two I feel the same conviction, I shall act on it.”

Victor and George came up the track, so Norman endeavoured to look bright. Victor brought his violin. He played exquisitely. The beauty of the scene, and the tranquil stillness of the hour inspired him. Now the strings vibrated neath his magic bow tremulous and low and sad, now grand and full. The friends reclining near by smoked quietly enraptured with the music. When he played some of the Irish airs Frank sang the words with exquisite pathos. His voice was a very fine tenor. Norman's and George's rich baritones harmonized well with it, but above and through it all thrilled and vibrated the sweet strains of Victor's violin.

CHAPTER VIII.

Monsieur Henrion's Seance.

Four years had passed since our friends had awakened the echoes over the Gorge, that lovely moonlight night, with sweet music and song.

Victor, Norman and Frank were drawing near the end of their last year at the University. Frank was a resident at the University. Victor and Norman lived at Kincora in accordance with their mother's wishes, though Judge Marshall had endeavoured at the beginning to insist that they should go as residents too. The worldly man wished to remove them from their mother's holy influence, but her firmness had again conquered.

One evening after dinner, when Mrs Marshall and two lady guests had retired to the drawing-room, the Judge addressed his sons and young Coleman, who was a guest at Kincora that evening.

"Well, are any of you young fellows coming to the Club to witness Monsieur Henrion's entertainment? He is the rage in Melbourne at present.

We have invited him round to the Club to-night and he is holding a special seance for our entertainment."

"Thanks Father," Norman answered, "I shall certainly avail of your invitation. I have heard such a lot of this fellow Henrion, and I should like very much to hear him bring forward his spirits."

"Very well Norman," the Judge replied. "Well Victor you are coming, are you not? And you Frank? You can come along in the motor. You will enjoy the entertainment I can promise you."

Frank merely shook his head, but Victor declined very emphatically.

"I certainly shall not go. I do not believe in this spirit communion. Henrion is a fraud doubtless, but whether he is or not, I have no desire to see him or dabble in this spiritualistic business."

"Oh Victor, you need not wax eloquent on the matter," the Judge sneered. "Of course I should have known you would not accept my invitation. You are I fear missing your vocation, I would advise you give up medicine and join your friends the Jesuits."

"No Father," Victor answered quietly, "I am not good enough for that, but I have not denied

my faith, and until I do, I shall not be present at entertainments not sanctioned by my Church."

The Judge bit his lip to hide his annoyance. However he said in an indifferent tone.

"Please yourself my son. Hurry up Norman. By the way your friend young Cosgrove is to be present to-night. That fellow is one in a thousand. He was educated at a sensible school and consequently is not troubled with a lot of mawkish sentiment."

Norman followed his father from the room. In going out he glanced at Victor and Frank Coleman and received a look of stern reproach from both. He had never once alluded to his secret trouble since that evening on the Buffalo over four years ago, when he had laid bare his heart to Frank. In fact latterly he had avoided Frank as much as possible, and young Coleman was too high-spirited to force his friendship where it was not appreciated.

Frank was grieved and hurt at Norman's attitude. Norman's friends were the fastest crowd at the University. Ernest Cosgrove was often with him. This intimacy with one whom Frank so thoroughly despised, so disgusted the latter, that he resolved to have nought to do with Norman.

Norman's reputation at the University was a very brilliant one. Though he associated with fellows of Cosgrove's calibre he was no party to their orgies. Success but stimulated his ambition and so he found in study a pleasure, and a safeguard too against the excesses he might have drifted into. But deliberate repudiation of a great grace, and reckless associations with licentious companions, were telling on him. Already his faith was dull and inert. He never missed his Sunday Mass, but he received the sacraments only twice a year, and then derived no comfort and very little profit from them. He had turned his back on the light, and was drifting, slowly indeed, but gradually, further away from the fresh vigorous faith of his boyhood. His father was proud of the young fellow, whose talents and brilliant academic distinctions had already made a stir in society and attracted the admiration of the Judge's own special set. Victor as a medical student was just as brilliant a success, but his loyal conservatism and scrupulous compliance with the precepts of his Church rendered him disagreeable to his father, to whom the incorruptable fidelity of his first-born was galling in the extreme.

When the Judge and Norman arrived at the fas-

lignable club to which the former belonged, they found a number of gentlemen already assembled in the reading-room. Norman knew them all as he had met them at "Kincora." They were the Upper Ten of the Victorian Metropolis. Cosgrove had already arrived. He immediately made his way towards young Marshall, and in his cynical fashion commented on the coming seance.

"So Norman, you have come to hear news from beyond the Styx. Charon has not yet arrived. Perhaps his medium is lost in Hades and cannot be found."

"Yes Cosgrove, I felt out of sorts this evening, and as stewing was out of the question, I thought I had better accept the Governor's invitation and see the show. They tell me this Henrion is a clever juggler."

"Juggler! yes I daresay this is just what he is. However Norman, all jokes aside I am intensely curious. I have read a good deal of this hypnotic spiritualistic business, but I have never been present at any exhibitions."

Just then, all eyes were turned towards the door of the room. The usher announced Monsieur Henrion and the Spirit-Master entered.

His was a remarkable figure. Considerably over medium height, perfectly built, he walked forward with a movement and grace that suggested more litheness than muscular strength. His face was pale with a pallor by no means anaemic, or suggestive of ill-health. His lips were full and ruddy, and his eyes were absolutely fascinating. Black as night they glowed and sparkled, and seemed to read through one's soul when he turned their steady gaze on each member of the assembly. He was dressed in an evening suit of perfect cut. Round his waist was a crimson sash on which was embroidered a cabalistic scroll in some Oriental characters. He wore a richly gemmed ring with diamonds round a large stone of opalesque tint. He introduced to the company a ghastly-looking individual. This man was indeed a contrast to the mesmerist. His face evidenced somehow that he was still young, but it was weird and haggard, as if he had some time been face to face with some awful horror. While Henrion's whole being suggested a panther-like grace, and a lusty vitality, his companion seemed the embodiment of hopeless inert wretchedness.

Norman commented to his friend on the ghost-like appearance of Henrion's friend.

“Yes he does seem an utter wreck,” Cosgrove assented, “I am told the fellow was a medical student at the 'Varsity five years ago. He made a mess of things somehow and cleared out to India. Henrion picked him up somewhere in the East, and attached him as a kind of body-servant. I believe he uses him as a medium.” But hush ! Henrion is about to speak.

“Gentlemen! I cannot express to you how honoured I feel at finding myself here on your invitation to-night,” the telepathist began in a perfectly modulated musical voice. “I am more than pleased that you have afforded me an opportunity to demonstrate some psychic phenomena to you, who I know are the most cultured and intellectual men in this city of Melbourne. Unfortunately this spirit communication is regarded so far with distrust and suspicion, even by liberal-minded men. Certain sects hound it down with the most implacable animosity. Their bitter hostility proves how much they fear it's development. Gentlemen! years ago, I was attracted to this mysterious science. An ardent neophyte I journeyed to the East, and in that land of mystery associated by us with the frenzy of fakirs, and the gross superstitions of fanatical believers in the Nirvana,

I found more true philosophy and more stunning revelations of hidden things than the greatest thinkers in my own land had ever dreamed of. Taught by Brahmins and mystics, I learned that "there are indeed more things in heaven and earth" than men e'er dreamed of." I acquired the great power of intercommunication with the spirits of the dead. At my call they come and speak to me. They reveal hidden secrets, they show me the falsity of our religious systems. Gentlemen I prophesy that the time will come when psychic research will fascinate every educated man, and revolutionize the religious world, and cause men to wonder how ignorance prevailed so long."

There was something magnetic about the man's rich voice. He held his audience enthralled. A mouse could be heard scurrying across the room, so still were the listeners.

"Pardon messieurs!" Henrion said as he switched off the electric lights. A full moon shone through the uncurtained windows and shed a pale light on Henrion and his satellite. The opal on Henrion's finger, grew bright with a phosphorescent light, that seemed to emit a kind of smoke. It was a talisman of some sort.

“Now Louis come here,” the wonder-worker commanded. His face grew tense and stern. His eyes were fixed steadily on the medium’s and basilisk-like held him entranced. Louis shivered, his face grew still more ghastly with some awful fear. He seemed to resist, but Henrion’s eyes mesmerised him until every limb, every muscle grew rigid and he stood still as a marble statue.

“Now gentlemen, my friend is in communication with the spirits,” Henrion announced. “To test the reality of the spirit presence here in this room, I will ask some one to question him on some purely personal matter. He will write the answer.”

“Monsieur Henrion, something occurred to-day which has annoyed me very much,” Mr Harper, one of the gentlemen present exclaimed. “As nobody knows what it is and I have so far kept it secret, if you or your medium can tell me what the matter was, I shall immediately believe in your communion with the spirits.”

Henrion led his medium to a writing-table put a sheet of paper before him, and put a pencil in his hand. Louis wrote something on the paper. Henrion examined it and handed it to Harper. The latter read it and gave vent to an exclamation of astonishment.

"Good Heavens! gentlemen. The fellow knows the matter I referred to. I challenged him, certain that he could not divulge what befell me to-day, but he has written it exactly. Monsieur Henrion, this is decidedly uncanny.

"Bah, rubbish!" Cosgrove interjected. "It is all clever juggling, nothing else."

"Do you think so, Ernest Cosgrove?" Henrion questioned sternly. "Shall I tell you something of your own private life, that will perhaps convince you otherwise?"

"I defy you to mention to me any of my private affairs," Cosgrove retorted insolently.

Henrion smiled a sardonic smile. Norman Marshall watching him closely, noticed a cruel glint of triumph in his eyes, as he took young Cosgrove aside to a corner of the room, and whispered into his ear.

Cosgrove started and grew deathly pale. His whole frame shook with terror. He gave vent to something between a groan and a scream, as he hastily drew back to the darkest part of the room, and said :

"Gentlemen I am convinced. This magician is a decided clairvoyant. I shall never dare to doubt his powers again."

“You are wise, my friend,” the telepathist said in bland tones. “Most men’s lives are more or less chequered, there are incidents in them which it would not be well to disclose publicly.”

Cosgrove remained silent and seemed very much agitated. Norman wondered what the Spirit-Master could have said to him.

A greater wonder still, followed. The room was filled with weird noises, succeeded by strains of music, that seemed to thrill and vibrate in every corner. The listeners quailed with an emotion akin to fear. Norman felt a creepy sensation as if he were close to the supernatural. The music was followed by discordant laughter, and a pandemonium of noisome sounds. Then an unexpected event happened.

Louis the mesmerised medium began to argue and remonstrate with some unseen being. Henrion shook him roughly but could not check him. Then Louis burst forth into language so vile and scurrilous, that the most blase individuals in the room were horrified. Henrion quivered with passion. Fool, sot, he hissed as he led the frenzied medium from the room. He endeavoured to explain when he returned. Norman Marshall interrupted him :

“Gentlemen! I hope you are convinced of the utter immorality of these telepathic seances. I came here on invitation, and have had enough to last me a life-time. This gentleman has acquired some demoniacal power, but not for good. You see the effects on his demoralized and imbeciled medium. I can assure Monsieur Henrion, that while I marvel at his powers, I condemn most emphatically this psychic research of which he professes to be an exponent.

Disgusted, with every fibre of his being in revolt against the uncanny orgy he had witnessed Norman Marshall almost rushed from the room out into the cool night air. Racked and tormented by conflicting emotions, he walked on and on through the city. Over Princes Bridge. Out along the St. Kilda Road, on and on, his mind a very whirlwind of torturing thought, his heart filled with remorse.

“Good God!” he mused, “What am I coming to? Am I to sink to the level of the sceptical set I associated with to-night at that fearful seance? Those irreligious would-be-godless cynics, who in their scepticism will listen to every mountebank and charlatan, who advances new blasphemies, and

exploits new theories against the salutary restraints and inspired precepts of Christ's Gospel. Is it to be such another whited sepulchre, that I am deaf to the ever insistent call within me, to the higher life? Fool I flatter myself that with my father's recusancy always before me as an example, I can mix in such society, and still be a Catholic, even though I do give the reins to ambition. My father: an arbiter of morals, a stern judge to unfortunate delinquents, for many of whom environment and heredity render clean crimeless lives impossible. 'This man a judge! and at this very moment countenancing by his patronage, breaking bread and drinking wine with a clever harlequin whose baneful influence has degraded to the lowest depths the wretch who is his slave. Well I must keep on yet awhile. This night's wierd business has unmanned me.'

The young fellow had been so absorbed, that he did not realize how late the hour was, though half an hour before crowded tram-cars with their animated freight of pleasure-worshippers, carriages and motors had flashed by from the theatres and the concert-halls. He looked at his watch and found that it was close on midnight. He felt weak and sick and leaned against the parapet of the

storm-wall, waiting for a passing cab or taxi. A gaily-painted automobile flashed by, close to him. He recognised it as his father's, and simultaneously saw who the occupants were; Judge Marshall and Ernest Cosgrove. They had both recovered their spirits and had apparently forgotten the gruesome events of a few hours before, for they were laughing and chatting very gaily. Norman wondered where his father could be going, at such a late hour, and in such company. Then he remarked that Cosgrove was staying with his cousin out at Windsor, and surmised that the Judge had offered to drive him home.

It was near morning when Norman arrived home at "Kincora." The house was still, but he noticed a light still burning in his mother's room. He let himself in with a latch-key. When passing by his mother's door, he thought he heard a sound of stifled sobbing. His heart was torn with pity and remorse. Her door, was slightly ajar. Norman entered noiselessly. His mother was kneeling in a recess before a beautiful ivory figure of the Crucified Saviour. Her head was thrown back, and her loosened hair fell in dark waves over her shoulders. Her face was a picture of living sorrow, as with parted lips and uplifted, pleading,

tortured gaze she prayed to the King of Martyrs for patience for herself, and mercy and repentance for her erring loved ones.

Norman went over to the kneeling figure, and placing his hand on her shoulder murmured softly, "Mother"—

Mrs Marshall started to her feet. So weak was she after her long Gethsemane of prayer, that she would have fallen, had not her son taken her in his arms and brought her to an ottoman, where he sat beside her, and spoke to her passionate words of love and sorrow.

"Oh Norman! my son, my boy! You have broken my heart, the mother exclaimed. "They told me where you have been this night. Oh my God! First my husband and now my son a pervert. Norman I have prayed for you, and watched over you every day of your life, and has it come to this?"

"Mother! my Angel-Mother!" the young fellow exclaimed, as he covered her face with passionate kisses. "God helping I will never again give you cause to grieve for me. It is true I was present to-night at the vile performance, they told you of. I rushed from the place in disgust filled with anger towards my father who brought me

there. My darling, I saw how pure and holy is the faith from which I have been drifting, and I promise you I will never again sin against it."

"Oh Norman, my son, my baby! Blessed be the God of Mercy to-night, for the glad words I have heard you utter. How glad Victor and Moira will be. God grant that your father will soon return to grace, then I shall die happy."

Mother and son sat for a long time together, he weeping tears of sorrow, and she tears of joy for her boy's conversion.



CHAPTER IX.

Cosgrove in Trouble.

Ernest Cosgrove was certainly an adept at dissimulation. For a brief time after he had listened to Henrion's whispered communication, to the surprise of Norman Marshall and the others present, he had evidenced visible symptoms not only of amazement but of actual fear. However he soon realized that his want of self-control had attracted considerable attention, and in order to disarm any suspicious he quickly regained his usual self-possession.

When Judge Marshall offered to drive him to Windsor, Cosgrove's voice was gay and hearty as he thanked the Judge and accepted the ride. On the way to his destination he was apparently in the best of spirits. A keen observer would have detected a hollow ring in his gaiety, but the Judge was not very observant, and so Cosgrove's pretence was successful in as far as his friend was concerned.

Having arrived at his cousin's he bade the Judge

good-night. He then went straight to his room. Here, where there was no longer need for simulation, the reaction set in. Ernest's face as he beheld it in his dressing-mirror, was so haggard and drawn that it shocked himself. He threw himself into an easy chair near the window and abandoned himself to his thoughts.

"God!" he muttered, "How that devil Henrion's words have unmanned me; 'Beware Cosgrove, Helen Sinclair your wife is in Melbourne.' I fear the Parcae are weaving a tangled web for me just now. I thought she had gone out of my life for ever. Ah fool that I was to have married her. Damn her am I going to suffer for my boyish folly for ever? By hell no!"

His face became positively fiendish, as he allowed his anger against the individual named by Henrion to take full possession of him. He rose and paced the room like a caged wild beast, his hands clenched tight, his face livid.

"Ha!" he laughed, "I fear neither God nor devil. I have staked my life on the non-existence of any God. Hitherto I have thought it vulgar, but, By Hell! this woman must be got rid of 'coute qu'il coute.' I must marry Moira Marshall. The Judge looks on me just now with favour, though Nor-

man holds aloof spite of all my wiles. I must win her, I must; and then how I shall gloat over Victor's disappointment and Coleman's despair. Coleman loves her I know. Ah, it will be a sweet revenge to take her from him. I must pretend leanings to Papistry, but By Heavens! once she is mine I shall pay back through her, her mother's dislike and her friends' snubs with compound interest. I want Moira Marshall for my revenge, as much as I want her for her fortune. I have failed to lead Norman altogether astray, but I will be revenged on all of them through her."

He rang the bell, and ordered the servant to bring him some refreshments. The man knew what he meant and returned with a tray on which was a decanter, a soda-syphon and glasses. He also delivered a letter which Cosgrove tore open immediately.

"Where did this come from," he queried.

"A lady called this evening Sir. When she was told you were not home, she left this letter to be delivered to you as soon as you would return."

Cosgrove tore open the envelope and read:—

My dearest Ernest,

You will be astonished to learn by this note, that I am back in Melbourne again. I know

I agreed to remain in America. I had no tie here. You won my love, married me, and then abandoned me, I have had a hard struggle in Frisco, and while my child was spared worked and toiled for her. But God has taken her from me, my darling angel died six months ago, and ever since I have had nothing to live for. Knowing how false you are I would never have returned; but then I remembered that you a married man, would perhaps deceive some other unsuspecting girl, and go through the sham of marriage. I have returned to demand of you to take me back as your wife, or let me obtain a divorce, and so free you to do as you choose. Should you take me back, you will not be long encumbered: I am dying of consumption. Several doctors have assured me I have but a few months to live. I am staying with my old friend Clare Cullen at Elsternwick. I shall expect you to-morrow evening. Should you not come I shall immediately take proceedings and proclaim myself in the divorce courts as your wife.

Your broken-hearted Helen.

“This decides the matter then,’ he exclaimed, as he hastily placed the letter in his pocket.” “What a fool I have been! How chivalrous towards a pretty shop-girl who amused me for a month or so. Other fellows would have gained their ends without marriage; but I a Bayard forsooth, bound myself by legal shackles in order to satisfy the

scruples of a timid girl. Well she must be got rid of. My father died and left me a miserable pittance. I am terribly involved, and must get money somehow, to win Moira Marshall and her fortune seems the easiest way just now. I certainly cannot afford to be dragged into the divorce court at this juncture. I must confide all to Aunt Maud, she is a woman in a thousand and can advise me best what to do."

He pressed the electric button again, and when the servant appeared enquired if Mrs. Wallace had come home.

"The Mistress has just come in, Sir," the servant replied, "She has gone to her room."

"Please tell her I wish to see her," Cosgrove ordered. The servant delivered the message and returned. "Mrs Wallace will see you in the red parlour, Sir," he announced.

Cosgrove hastened to interview his hostess.

Mrs Wallace looked a decidedly charming little woman, though her charms were nearly all artificial.

"Well Ernest! What weighty business have you to impart to your fairy god-mother now? she queried in jest. "Why my Adonis, you look as

uncanny as if you had seen a ghost. What is the matter?"

"There is sufficient the matter, Aunt Maud, to warrant for me a prospect of many sleepless nights. Auntie you are the only real friend I possess, hence I come to you now for advice in the greatest strait I have ever been in in my life."

"Well, my Dear! let us hear your trouble. Ah, you men are cruel monsters. You treat us poor women as if we were devoid of feeling. My devoted husband," she continued with a bitter sneer, "is amusing himself to-night, paying court to that handsome actress who is the rage in Melbourne just now. What a blessing there is so little love lost between us. But you my only relative, the only one I really love come to me only when you have got into some scrape or want money. Oh I know you Ernest, but withal I am always ready to help you for your dead mother's sake. What is your trouble now? I presume you want advice as to how you may win Miss Marshall, the Judge's beautiful daughter."

"Aunt, you have guessed part of my trouble. I am indeed anxious to make Moira Marshall my wife, first because I want her fortune, and secondly through my treatment of her, to have revenge on

her mother who distrusts me, her brother Victor, who despises me, and her lover Coleman who hates me. Aunt you are not squeamish and have no Quixotic ideas of honour, fidelity, and all that conventional rubbish, which sounds so well in theory but which is never nowadays practised. I am not concealing from you that I do not care one whit for Moira Marshall. She may be lovely but she is not my style, she is too cold and passionless. When I have gained my ends through her, a divorce will rid me of her. But there is a very formidable obstacle in the way of my schemes being accomplished. Three years ago I had an "affaire du coeur," which seems likely to cost me a good price now. I was enamoured of a young shop-girl, but she was 'ultra' proper, and though she loved me, she would have nought to do with me until we were married before a registrar. I was fool enough to comply. A few months later I tired of her, and she seeing this meekly consented to leave the country. Poor thing she went away quietly and gave me very little trouble, but now she has turned up again, and in a fit of virtue, in order to save some other innocent girl from my treachery, she says, insists on my proclaiming her as my wife, or else going through the

exposure of the Divorce Court with her. You know how either alternative would destroy my chances with the Judge's daughter. She says she is dying of consumption but I shall run no risks. She must be got rid of. I say Aunt she must be got rid of."

The hardened society butterfly to whom he had told his tale of wrong and crime, shuddered when she heard his voice hiss the last sentence, his brows contracted, and murder written on gleaming eye and cruel lip.

"Ernest! Ernest! Are you mad? For God's sake, beware, beware. You must put away this dreadful thought. God knows you have done enough wrong, without the awful thing you insinuate. Oh no, not that, not that!" she cried.

"Please Aunt don't get hysterical. I say again, she must be got rid of somehow. Suggest some other means if you can and I shall gladly adopt them."

"You must pretend you are glad she has returned. She loves you still, I presume. Impress on her the necessity of keeping your alliance secret, until you shall have obtained your degree. Get her away to Sydney or Brisbane. Anything, anything rather than the horror you suggest."

“Very well Aunt, I will endeavour to carry out your scheme. May I count on you for assistance.”

“Yes Ernest, you may count on me. I little like the business, but you are my nephew and for your mother’s sake I will assist you.”

The hopeful pair lingered long, and discussed over wine the execution of their shameful plot. Towards early morning, Cosgrove staggered to his room, wild, reckless and intoxicated. Strange to say he slept soundly until mid-day, but what a sword of Damocles hung o’er his head.

His plotting was Satanic, his accomplice not utterly abandoned but none too conscientious. Both were the products of godless education and elimination of religion, and still at all events both were stars of fashionable society. Ah Society, what devils in human guise some of its votaries are! How many hearts black as hell, are cloaked neath the polished manners, the fashionable costumes, and the smiling faces, of some of its very elite.

CHAPTER X.

Frank Coleman.

A young fellow in immaculate cricket flannels, reclined on a lounge-chair, under the magnolias, on the front lawn at "Kincora," day-dreaming.

His face was the face of an artist and a poet, so the dark brown eyes would imply as with head thrown back on his hands clasped round the dark curls, he gazed up at the blue sky, seen through the quivering leafy canopy. But surely if artist and poet as those eyes imply, every line of his handsome face emphatically asserts that he is a strong, high-souled, manly man as well. No mere dreamer of idle dreams, no impractical pursuer of unsubstantial chimeras; but a strong man who knows and realizes the world's wiles and the weakness of human-kind, knows of them and knows how to combat them. Who having conceived a good resolve would execute it or die in the attempt. Who with an artist's ideals of life, and beauty, and truth, aimed at those ideals himself,

and though he knew how sadly inferior to his ideals most men were, was yet no chilling censor, but consoled himself when he found a few concrete realizations of his great-hearted conceptions of true manliness. A man who could be glad with the gay, sympathetic with the suffering, compassionate with the weak, ecstatic with kindred spirits; but unbending and pitiless with the perversè.

His manly form, his grand Celtic face was a perfect type of virile beauty. Beauty of soul and strength of character combined were portrayed in that face. It was not the face of a twentieth century Adonis, but the face of a man with soul to think, and will to act, and strength to execute good and noble deeds.

As each passing evidence of sunlight and shadow is depicted on the grand slopes of his native Kerry mountains, so each heart-throb of bright hope or sad memory was evidenced in his open face. With the blood of Irish chieftains in his veins—his mother was a direct descendant of the heroic O'Sullivan of Beare—Frank Coleman had arrived at man's estate, as chivalrous and high-souled in this matter-of-fact century as ever was knight in

the age of romance, or hero in the days of the Crusaders.

He took a letter from his pocket, and read it through for the twentieth time since he had received it that morning.

Dearest Frank,

It is with the greatest sorrow, that I have to write to you of our beloved uncle's death. It occurred so suddenly that I have not yet recovered the shock. We were chatting in the library here at "Smerwick," when uncle stooping down to fix a log on the hearth, suddenly fell forward, dead. He had been complaining of heart trouble for some time back, the doctor told me he had expected uncle's death at any moment, but did not think it wise to alarm me unnecessarily. Oh Frank. come to me as quickly as you can. I am again orphaned. Should your examination be not over, do not wait. Uncle has left us all his property so you will not need to follow a profession. Tell Father Edward I cannot write to him just now, but you will tell him the sad news, and he will I know offer up the Holy Sacrifice for our poor uncle. Frank he was all that a father could be to me. I hoped he would live to meet you, but God decreed otherwise. Come Frankie, come quickly to your

Broken-hearted sister,

Eileen.

"Yes little girl, I will come," Frank exclaimed, and be father and brother to you in one. Poor

wounded dove, you and I have known too well what bereavement is, but God has been very good to us."

He put the letter back, and drew forth another written in a firm, masculine hand. It was from his uncle's lawyers, intimating to him that all his uncle's wealth some twelve million dollars had been divided equally between Frank and Eileen.

"Good Heavens!" Frank exclaimed, "What shall I ever do with such wealth? Well I am grateful for it, money is a great power for good or evil. God helping, I shall make use of the talents he has entrusted to me, and put them to usury for the good of my fellow-men and my own soul."

How I shall enjoy the trip to America. I hope Norman will accompany me. How bright and happy he seems these days, and what a wealth of gratitude and hope fulfilled in his mother's face. I wonder if Norman has forgotten that old trouble of his. I hardly think so, I fancy I can read a grand resolve in his face just now. Can it be that with all his talents and great prospects, he will renounce everything and become a priest? I hope so, as I believe he will never be happy in the world."

"But shall I be happy myself?" he mused.

“Well I am afraid to bring the matter to an issue. A year ago I knew no other love than that which I felt for my parents, Eileen and my friends; and then suddenly too, I experienced that other love, the love of a man for the woman he hopes to make his wife. Well before I leave I shall tell Moira my feelings and offer her my hand. Should she reject me, I must try to get accustomed to the agony of knowing that I must live without her. Now, before I disclose my feelings to her, the very hope of the happiness she can bestow, makes the sun brighter, the skies bluer, the whole world fairer and more beautiful. After, should the hope be blighted, I am afraid all worldly happiness at all events, will end for me. Like Tennyson when he lost his friend, but in a greater measure shall I feel bereft:—

“With weary steps to loiter on,
Tho’ always under altered skies,
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.”

However, I can live to do good, and find genuine pleasure in the doing of it, though the music of life will no more be so entrancing. I can manage in the words of the poet “to rise on stepping-stones of my dead self, to higher things.” God forbid though that Moira should ever marry

Ernest Cosgrove. I can bear any other misery, but the very thought of such a thing drives me mad.

A gorgeous burst of music, disturbed his musings. He stood up and listened, all his soul bathing and basking in the flood of melody that rose, and fell, and vibrated in a cataract of sound around him. Great glorious chords, like a peal of welcome to a glorified soul just entered within the Golden Gates after the victory of the spirit over the world and flesh. Low throbbing cadences, like wailing prayers from sorrowing mortals to the God of Mercy ; then a mighty burst of harmony that made the soul of the listener long for wings to soar up into space wafted on these buoyant waves of glorious music.

The music died away in long lingering cadence, then the player struck a few chords, and a voice of thrilling power and sweetness sang the lovely words:—

“Softly unsealing, calm holy feeling,

Breathes o’er my spirit a strain sweet and low.
Voices seem calling, rising and falling,

Borne o’er the ocean of long, long ago,

Breathe on sweet organ, let soft music flow,

Rising and falling, waking sweet mem’ries of
long, long ago.”

Red sunset gleaming, o'er chancel streaming,
Lights the dim arches around with its glow,

The singer's voice was as an angel voice, singing
of Faith, and Hope, and Love, in the next
few lines,

"So Love can lighten, so Heaven can brighten
All the dim shadows of life here below."

Frank stole to the window of the music-room. A young girl, dressed in snowy white, with rapt face raised upwards, and eyes that glowed with a wealth of holy meaning, more even than the words of her song conveyed, was caressing the ivory keys of the organ, and pouring forth a flood of melody and prayer in her marvellous voice. The face reminded Frank of a picture of St. Cecilia he had seen in a picture-gallery. The singer was Moira Marshall. Frank gazed awhile and a new light dawned upon him. Then as the song died away he silently drew away.

"Ah no!" he said, half aloud, I can not dare to speak to her of my love. I surrender her to Thee, My God. The lovely soul of that singer can never mate with any man much less with the licentious spirit of Ernest Cosgrove.

He walked away in silence, and yet Frank Coleman was glad as he went down the lawn in the shade of the magnolias and mid the perfume of the clustering roses.



CHAPTER XI.

The Ball at Kincora.

The University term had ended. Victor Marshall and Ernest Cosgrove had both obtained their medical degrees, Victor with brilliant distinctions, but Cosgrove barely managed to escape being sent down. About the same time Norman Marshall and Frank Coleman were called to the Bar. Judge Marshall insisted on giving a big ball to celebrate his sons' successes.

Mrs Marshall much as she disliked these social functions, did not raise any objections. She knew her husband's position made it imperative that such functions should be held occasionally at her home, and so she was wise enough to comply with the exigencies of the society in which they moved. Besides, Moira had finished her education, and as her father insisted that she should "come out," her mother was pleased that her child's "debut" should be in her own home.

Invitations were accordingly forwarded to and accepted by all the elite of Melbourne fashionable

society. Dinners or balls at "Kincora" were always brilliant and most enjoyable events. No gathering where the Judge was present could be dull, and Mrs Marshall was a perfect hostess.

Moira Marshall was by no means so enthusiastic about her "first ball" as most debutantes usually are. Like her mother, she preferred the quiet enjoyment of those happy evenings at her home, when there were no other guests than Frank Coleman and George Harding. She looked forward therefore to her first public appearance rather as an ordeal than a pleasure. But on the night of the ball she sacrificed her own wishes and determined to enjoy whatever pleasure there would be.

The ball-room looked like fairy-land festooned as it was with roses and lovely flowers. The verandahs were changed for the time being into conservatories, with spreading palms and rare exotics. Coloured lights gleamed among the foliage of the trees out on the lawn. The band played intoxicating music, dreamy sensuous waltzes and exhilarating dance-tunes. The assembly was distinguished indeed. All the first people of the city were there: well-gowned distinguished men and exquisitely dressed women, but the queen of the gathering was Moira Marshall.

She was radiantly beautiful in creamy white satin and costly lace. Her mother rejoiced for there was no proud consciousness of her extraordinary beauty in her child's face, rather the light of one who sees beyond. Could the good nuns have seen their darling child the idol of their school they too would have been glad, for ever through the night with men, some rather blase indeed, crowding on her their attentions and acknowledging by many tokens her charms, she looked more like a Bride of Heaven, a young postulant, clad in the world's raiment for the last time, before she casts it aside for ever for the convent robes. Her father was proud indeed, but his pride in his lovely child was only a wordly feeling.

Frank Coleman saw her and was more convinced than ever that no man would ever call her wife.

Ernest Cosgrove was maddened at the sight of her, and schemed and plotted all the more how he should win her.

Norman was in glowing spirits. He danced and chatted gaily with the fair ones, who every one, would be glad to secure him for herself, but all the while he kept saying to himself: "Vanity and vanities, and all is vanity save serving God and loving Him alone." He heard it in the refrain of the

music, the tripping of the dancers' feet beat time to it, he saw it mottoed 'mid the flowers and drapings of the ball-room. Even when his laugh sang lightest and his conversation was most sparkling, he gloried in the resolution he had made, that this function intended by his father to mark his espousals with the world, and ambition, and pleasure was in reality his last appearance on the stage of Vanity, his Renunciation festival, for henceforth he would give himself absolutely to God.

"I am glad to find you so gay to-night, Norman," Cosgrove greeted, as he came up to young Marshall during the night. I have heard such strange rumours lately, of your rising abnormally every morning, and going to adore, as I suppose you Catholics call it. I am glad that your demeanour to-night, gives the lie to these reports. I must say I have not believed them, I know you are too fond of this kind of thing, to have any fears you would develop into an ascetic."

"Thanks Cosgrove, for your opinion," Norman laughingly responded, "And be glad while you may, for I am a queer chap, you can never tell what I may turn to."

"Oh! I am easy on that score, Norman. These

ladies here will see that you pay your due 'dévairs' to their charms. By the way, Marshall! Your sister is stunning to-night. Half the fellows, are daggers drawn in their attempts to be first-favourite, I myself am a keen competitor."

"Oh, indeed!" Norman answered coldly, I would advise you to try where you have a chance of being more successful. I do not think Moira and you would harmonize at all. Pardon me Cosgrove, I see Coleman and Victor over there. I wish to have a word with them for a few moments."

Norman joined his brother and Frank. "Snubbed by God," Cosgrove exclaimed as he gazed after him with a scowl. He went over to a corner where his Aunt, Mrs Wallace was flirting with a bevy of admirers.

"Say lads!" Norman exclaimed, "Let us find Harding and stroll down the lawn. I have something to say to you old chums that must be said to-night."

"Right Norman!" Victor answered, "You and Frank can get away now. I see George over there with Violet and Moira. Go round to the summer-house in front of the library. The grounds round there are not illuminated, so we shall find the place untenanted."

"What a gay crowd Frank," Norman remarked. "A stranger would fancy this the happiest assembly he had ever seen, but we who know some of these folks so well, know how artificial all this laughter is, and what queer, mean natures are hidden under some of those glossy shirt fronts, and costly corsages. See Cosgrove over there for instance. Good Heavens! How did I ever associate with that fellow as a friend. I never mistook him for a saint, but not until these last few months did I find how utterly depraved the man is."

"Yes Norman! I fear he is no good," Frank answered. "There are indeed some queer specimens of humanity here to-night, but thank God, there are as noble beings as can be found on earth here too. There is your mother and Moira, George Harding and Violet belonging to our own faith, and there are non-Catholics here among this brilliant gatherings, who would rather die, than stoop to anything low or unmanly."

I know it Frank, I know it, and the fact makes me all the more indignant when I realize that it was in order to stand well with these as well as others, that my father renounced his Faith. I am convinced that his unbelief is no more logical than

is Cosgrove's. Cosgrove does not believe in God, because he does not want to. Did he allow himself to see that there is a Supreme Being, he could not be so reckless in following his desires. He would have to put on the brake. My father knows there is a God, but will not believe that He is to be worshipped according to the ruling of Our Faith, because bound by such ordinances, he thinks he would lose his popularity with this set who are his friends. What a price he is paying for his position. He has lost his self-respect. 'There are many here who despise him because he has' compromised his faith, and the others, well they are heartless parasites, who flatter him while he is in power, but should he lose his position, would ostracise him as if he were a leper.'

"Yes Norman, it is just as you say," Frank agreed, "And to me the sorry part is, that with his talents, he could have gained his present eminence even had he not compromised his religion."

"I feel sure he could have, Frank. Some of us Catholics imagine we are more hated in this country than is really the case. We are silly enough, to be frightened by the extravagant abuse and denunciations of a few starving parsons, who must needs be sensational in order to draw a crowd, and

who are encouraged by a press that panders to sectarianism. Why! when you go about and mix with the people, you find them for the most part liberal and broad-minded, worthy sons of this great Continent of ours."

"Well, Norman, what great secret are you about to tell us? It must be something pleasant I know, for your face is beaming. I am sure you are genuinely happy this evening, and not pretending to be so, as I fear you have been so often, since we left dear old Xavier's."

"Yes, Frank, old man! I am happy, ever so happy. But here comes Vic. and Hardy. I do not think Frank you will be surprised when you hear my story, but the others will be."

Hallo Vic.! Hallo Hardy! Now, the Inseparables as they used to call us long ago at Xavier's are together again."

"What the deuce are you so mysterious about, Norman?" George blurted out, "I am missing a promised dance over you, and the lady would slay me, if looks could kill. Come tell us what it is. Are you 'struck on' somebody here to-night? Have you popped the question and been accepted? Tell us if so, and let us cast lots for the office of Best Man."

"Dear old lads! Frank, Victor, George, I have brought you out here to tell you that I have decided to become a Jesuit."

"At last, Norman!" Frank said as he shook his friend's hand. Victor stood amazed, George exclaimed, as if he had received an electric shock.

"What, Norman! You a Jesuit!"

"Yes, old chums! Norman answered. The moonlight gleaming on his face showed the ecstatic expression. Frank Coleman thought that such another look of sacrifice must have haloed the face of St. Francis Xavier, when he remembered the words of Ignatius, and renounced the world for a life of holiest heroism, and sublimest sacrifice."

"Yes," Norman continued. "For a long time, I have kicked against the goad, ever since I left Xavier's in fact. Frank you remember what I told you that memorable night on the Buffalo, where with God so near, I had almost conquered myself, and resolved to follow His voice. But I resisted though the Voice was ever calling me, even when in my pride, I was angry with it, and became careless and cold. Sometimes my whole being yearned and craved for a life higher than that which I was selecting, for something to which I could cling in my weakness and indigence, for

something which could fill the void in my heart that no earthly love could fill. Then I argued and said that I like others could love and obey my God, and still give a part of my heart to worldly love and worldly pleasures. I used to envy you lads your happy enjoyment of life, and the peace that always accompanied it. I tried to be like you, but no, the Voice was always telling me, that you had your lots appointed, mine was to be different, to be a complete renunciation of everything worldly, an entire surrender of myself to God. The craving, the yearning was never an intermittent condition, it was always present in my soul. In despair I rebelled. I chose companions who were libertines, though thank God, I never joined their excesses. I read books that were irreligious though my faith was never shaken. I went into occasions that were like quick-sands, though thank the God who always protected me, I was never engulfed. At last, a revelation of the wickedness of my associates burst on my soul like an earthquake shock. It was perhaps the last grace that God intended towards a rebellious being, who strove against His will. The final victory was achieved that night when I pained you all so much, by going with my father to that

wretched seance of Monsieur Henrion's. Anyway I have determined to follow God's call, and I am already so glad, that I could sing for very joy. This week I must acquaint my father and set out for the novitiate as soon as ever I can. I am sorry dear lads, I must leave you, but God wills it, and there is no joy save in doing His Holy will."

Victor's eyes were moist as he took his brother's hand in a warm clasp.

Frank said: "I knew Norman you would surrender at last."

George murmured: "God bless you Norman. So this has been your struggle. I always knew you were different from the rest of us, spite of all your gaiety."

The guests were departing. The dawn was appearing over the spires and turrets of the city. The four friends returned to the ball-room and bestowed their attentions on the guests who still lingered. Soon the last carriage had rolled down the drive, and the Inseparables were free, one to think of the beauty of the life he was about to enter, the others to wonder and then be glad for their friend's sake.

CHAPTER XII.

A Discarded Wife—The Opium Den.

“I cannot believe it; after all those years of cruel neglect, I cannot persuade myself that he wants me back again. Should this hope prove false I cannot stand it, I shall go mad. I had schooled myself to his indifference though I loved him all the time. Now when he tells me he will take me back again, all the old joy has returned; but should he deceive me a second time, the agony will be unbearable.”

The speaker was a young woman, a girl almost, with a sad, sweet face, and eyes that told a story of hopeless sorrow.

“Helen, what nonsense! Why, darling, he would scarce trouble about you, were he not sincere. He has settled down now, he has passed his last examination and can practice his profession. Of course he will acknowledge you as his wife. You ought to be ever so glad to be known as the wife of such a brilliant young doctor as Ernest Cosgrove.”

The girl shook her head, “I am not so sure

Clare. It was a fatal day that I met Ernest Cosgrove. I was an orphan, with no living friend to warn me or advise me. After a childhood of luxury, the drudgery of the life of a shop-girl became unbearable. Then he seemed so true, so devoted, and so willing to marry me. But since then I have found that when it's a question of getting what he desires, he gets it and complies with any conditions, heedless of after complications. You know my story Clare; how quickly he tired of me and how he told me his young wife that he hated me, cursing himself for his folly in having married me. Ah, Clare! the man who abandoned me after a few short months is not likely to prove a devoted husband now. However I shall go to Sydney with him, though I have a presentiment that he means me no good."

The girl's friend looked at her in sympathy. "Do not worry yourself unnecessarily Helen child, after a few months you will laugh at those fears. My God! should Cosgrove ill-use you in any way, I would travel the very earth to expose and punish him."

"Hush Clare, Hush," Helen Cosgrove warned. "Hark there is the bell. Oh, I wonder if Ernest has come."

Clare Cullen went out the hall, and opening the door admitted Ernest Cosgrove.

“Good-night” Miss Cullen, “How is Helen? You are so good to give her a home here. But I will relieve you of her next week. I shall take her to Sydney where until I am established she can live with my aunt.”

“Well, indeed,” the old spinster said testily, “it is about time you made amends to the poor girl for your shameful treatment of her. However you are both so young that you can make her happy even now. But let me tell you that though Helen Harris was only a shop-girl when you met her she was born a lady. I consider her too good for you. She has no relatives, but let me warn you sir, that Clare Cullen is her friend, and will hound you down should any harm befall the young girl who is your lawful wife.”

“I deserve all your reproaches, Miss Cullen,” Cosgrove said humbly. “I admire your fidelity, but let me assure you, you will never again have cause to regret Helen’s marriage.”

“Well let us hope so,” Clare answered in a conciliatory tone. Goodness knows, you have made her suffer enough, to warrant your striving for the remainder of your life, to make her happy.”

Cosgrove followed Miss Cullen into the dining-room where his wife awaited him.

The pseudo-devoted husband simulated a tenderness, when all the time his heart was raging against the poor girl he had so basely deceived, and his brain was plotting how best he could get her out of his way, and so be at liberty to dupe and betray another victim.

The sad face of his wife brightened with a glad light of hope and happiness, when she listened to his tender words, and endearing expressions.

“Well Helen I have decided to take you to Sydney earlier than I had intended. Next week, my little wife we shall set out by boat. We will have a pleasant time in the Harbour City, and will enjoy a delightful holiday, before I return to start work and make a home for my poor neglected wife.”

“Oh Ernest how happy you make me. I had thought you so cold and cruel that I had given up all hopes of ever being restored to your love. Believe me, my husband, I will endeavour to make you glad you have taken me back. My whole aim and desire in life shall be to make you happy.”

At last the false coward pretended to tear himself away from Helen. He made all arrangements

for their departure to Sydney, then he went out into the night and laughed cruelly and bitterly to himself. The night was dark, but it suited his base designs, better than the cheery brightness of the cottage he had left.

His aunt, Mrs Wallace had advised him to take his wife away to Sydney and to stay with her for a few weeks. She volunteered to become an accomplice by going to reside in Sydney for some time herself. She would pretend a great liking for the girl and would be very kind to her, while Ernest endeavoured to win the hand of Moira Marshall. But she stipulated that he himself should pay occasional visits to Sydney, in order to keep up the role of a devoted husband. "You say that with her disease so far advanced, she can live only a few months at most," Mrs. Wallace had urged, "Well that being so you can afford to be kind to the poor creature while she lasts, and pretend affection even though you do not feel it."

But Cosgrove was not disposed to wait until death should claim his poor wife. What if she contrary to his expectations should linger on for years, should even recover. In that case he assured himself that marriage with Moira Marshall

would be out of the question. And it was imperative that this event should take place very soon, or at all events that in anticipation of its occurrence his creditors should give him a respite.

"She must be got rid of," he insisted to himself. "I cannot wait long. Why should I pause at anything that baulks my desires; besides I have nobody to account to. I must gamble on to the end. I have staked my chances, lived my life, gratified my desires on the speculation that there is no Hereafter, no God. Well it is too late now to play any other game. If there is no God, I hold a trumⁿ hand and will play a winning game to the end, and then restful oblivion. If there is a God." He shuddered at thought. "Bah! I am growing superstitious. God or no God I will not change the game. And as regards her, there will not be much harm in anticipating for her by some easy means, the death that is after all only a few months distant. Then freedom, wealth, revenge."

"This anxiety is preying on my nerves. I must go to our delightful Lotos Club and court forgetfulness for this night."

He walked on with quick step to the railway station and got on a train bound for Flinders Street. Arrived in the city he hired a hansom and

drove to East Melbourne. He dismissed the cab in front of an imposing looking private residence. He rang the bell and was admitted by an usher in curious livery. He ascended a flight of stairs from a dimly-lighted hall, paused on the first landing before a heavily curtained entrance. Cosgrove touched an electric button, the curtains were drawn back by an Oriental in fantastic garb. A door slid back, and Cosgrove entered a spacious room, softly illuminated by electric globes, shaded in soft ruby tints. The place was decidedly Eastern in its arrangement and furniture. The walls were hung with bizarre tapestry of golden tissue. All round the room on low cushions, settees and draped lounges lay strange figures of men, mostly young, in evening dress, some drowsy looking and languid, some absolutely inert in a heavy coma, others were smoking from strange looking pipes some drug that gave out a pleasant, narcotic aroma.

Cosgrove procured from an attendant a "chandoo" pill or opium ball and one of the fantastic pipes. He filled the pipe with some light tobacco inserted the opium and having lit it reclined on a couch and proceeded to smoke the drugged chibouk. So this was the calumet the plotter offered

to his racked nerves and tortured brain. This was the Hall of Oblivion, the Elysium where he and a few others of the dissipated "jeunesse doree" of the Victorian metropolis at the risk of the greatest moral degradation and physical ruin, enervated their manhood for the sake of a few hours unnatural abstraction from themselves, with visions of a sensual kind, to render the time spent in Lethe, more agreeable still to their depraved natures. A fashionable opium-den no less, whose patrons were bound by the strictest secrecy, to preserve not only its locality, but its very existence an inviolable secret.

The faces of the sleepers grew ghastly. A wan-ness and a haggard contortion of features caused them to look prematurely old. Moving about in the subdued light the Orientals in their grotesque garb seemed like evil spirits, who had cast a spell on the prostrate dreamers. Occasionally a sleeper uttered a few incoherent words, or gave vent to laughter that sounded weird in the silent hall. Cosgrove's faculties gradually grew hazy. The unpleasant realization of the mesh of difficulties which surrounded him vanished. His eyes closed, an attendant removed the baneful pipe, and Ernest Cosgrove added yet another to the group of de-

bauched "Lords of the Universe," who had degraded their humanity so fearfully, and turned to such a fearful use, those faculties of soul and body with which the Great God had endowed them.

It was a ghastly, haggard set of faces that the stolid faced oblique-eyed Oriental gazed on next morning, before he aroused the sleepers from their debasing coma. The return to consciousness was awful. Ernest Cosgrove shuddered with horror as he beheld the pallid faces of his debauched companions. With parched tongue, aching head and palsied limbs he arose. The odour of the room brought on an agonising nausea. The memory of his entanglements and difficulties came back to his mind more formidable than before. He followed the attendant, underwent an elaborate bath and passively submitted to the treatment that restored his abused faculties, and dispelled the debauched appearance that had resulted from his carouse.

"I must not visit this damned saloon for a long time again," he muttered as he strolled out into the street. "I pay too great a price for the temporary oblivion. Besides I want all my nerve for the work I have to do."

CHAPTER XIII.

Father Coleman.

Father Coleman tendered an invitation to dinner to his nephew and his friends, prior to Frank's departure. Victor had previously promised George Harding to run up to "Mundoona" on that day for a week's shooting, so he and George had to decline the invitation. Frank and Norman accepted, but they arranged with their friends that they would go up country a few days later and join the other half of the Inseparables at "Mundoona."

Father Coleman's parish was a thriving suburb. His presbytery and his church conveyed a fair clue to the character of the priest. The presbytery bespoke the gentleman of culture and refined tastes. Elegantly-furnished rooms; the dining-room bordering on the luxurious in its appointments, yet with no effeminate gew-gaws, or tawdry bric-a-brac. The sideboard exquisitely carved, was adorned with costly silver, the handsome leather suite, the wallpaper, the pictures and engravings

all harmonized and told of aesthetic tastes in the master of the establishment.

The library walls were lined from ceiling to floor with well-packed book-cases. All the world's greatest thinkers : poets, philosophers, novelists, scientists, theologians were there represented. It was a palace of delights, that spacious book-lined room to the student or literateur.

If the visitor to the presbytery were inclined to think its appointments a trifle "ultra" for a priest, the owner's bedroom, could he by chance find the door open on his way to the library, would dissociate from his mind all ideas of a "bon vivant" with the Pastor. Scantily furnished, with bare white walls, and waxed uncarpeted floor, there was in it anything but luxuriousness. Opposite the door a narrow bed with hair mattress and white counterpane. On the marble mantel-piece a tall crucifix and two beautiful statues, one of the Sacred Heart, the other of the Mother Immaculate. Hanging over the mantelpiece was a fine painting of the Man of Sorrows, the only picture in the room. In front of the mantelpiece a prie-dieu, and near by on a small polished table, a pile of spiritual books. A small wash-stand and a wardrobe were the only other articles of furniture in the room.

The Church was the pride of the parish. The chaste marble altars and sanctuary railing, the rich stained-glass windows, the Stations of the Cross and statuary, no tawdry burlesques, but real works of art, all the sacred furniture down to the smallest detail told how beautiful was the Pastor's conception of the adornments of God's house and how well in accordance with the means of his people, had he externated his ideal in the adorning of his beautiful church. A priest beholding this temple for the first time would exclaim "*Quam dilecta tabernacula tua Domine virtutum. O quam metuendus est locus iste, vere non est hic aliud nisi dōmus Dei, et porta coeli.*"

Father Edward Coleman walked lesiurely up and down the garden walk, awaiting the arrival of his young guests. Tall and stately, with a face and figure denoting an energetic strong-willed character, he resembled his nephew Frank. Though well over forty one could scarce believe his years were more than thirty odd. His life had been as strenuous as it well could have been, and yet his regular habits, his orderly method of doing his work and taking due recreation, had helped him to preserve intact not only the appearance, but

the vigor and the lusty vitality of youth. At the commencement of his labours in the Archdiocese, the kindly old soggarths who were his neighbours, with all the many virtues, all the charming geniality, and all the horror of innovation of the old school of grand old Irish priests looked askance at his methods, which were indeed very much in advance of their own antiquated and perhaps effete in this decidedly matter-of-fact new world—modes of “*pascendi oves.*” It is a grand and secure theological maxim, that “*nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est*” but it can and has been misapplied to matters altogether outside its province. Anyway Father Coleman’s sermons were regarded as revolutionary. The old veterans had been content with pious and unctuous homilies on sin and virtue, heaven and hell. In the old country so full of faith and charming simplicity, those sermons were sufficient for the people, but Father Coleman saw that in this pleasure-loving, materialistic, sunny land, it was not enough to tell the people of the heinousness of mortal sin, the beauty of grace, the horrors of hell and the glory which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man had ever conceived” of God’s celestial kingdom. No, these Southerners were a mixed race, they

lived in a land with no past history of religious persecutions to stimulate them to an emulation of sublimest heroism. Their faith was not spontaneous, not the glorious heritage handed down by fathers who had suffered persecution through loyalty to its tenets. Their lives were too easy, wealth or at all events comfort too easily acquired to allow God to be a potent influence in them. They found so much that was enticing and fascinating in this sun-kissed, prosperous continent, that they would not regard with due gravity the great truths, and the obligations imposed on them by the Catholic Faith except that they were compelled by clear logical proofs and demonstrations to admit that such obligations could not be denied. And so Father Coleman varied his discourses on sin and heaven and hell, with dogmatic sermons on the sacraments, the divinity of the Church, with warnings on the dangers of the age and the best means of counteracting them.

For a time he had the mortification of finding his ways and his methods, his tastes and his hobbies made the subject of very caustic criticism at the monthly conferences.

"Oh! Father Michael, how are you keeping?"

One old pioneer queried of an old crony who like himself had in the days gone by, the days of long bush rides and ministrations most heroically fulfilled, in the face of a cumulus of adverse conditions, had with true sacerdotal charity and apostolic zeal, borne the heat and the burden of the day and faced the brunt of the battle. "Faith you are looking as fresh as the Spring. You will keep the young bloods waiting a long time, before one of them will be called to fill the vacancy at K——."

"Och! Father James, sure it's time we old veterans cleared out. We are out of date, my boy. What is this I hear of this chap Coleman, establishing sodalities, and founding clubs, and maintaining theses down there at S——? Why, he is talking over the heads of the people. Much the lads down there know of his propositions and arguments. What they want is plenty fire and brimstone with an occasional glimpse at heaven. Give me the good old Redemptorist method every time."

Is it not strange but none the less a fact how consoriorious we children of the Gael are oftentimes? Aliens must remark it in us and smile. I remember how mortified I felt many years ago when I

spent a holiday with an English priest at a characteristically Irish village on the West Kerry coast. My friend had called my attention over and over again to this particular Celtic trait, and I each time hotly contended that it was no more peculiar to us than to his own Saxon race. One evening we were warmly discussing the matter, when one of the Ancients of the village came up to us. He was a fine specimen of the Irish peasant. My companion drew him out. I felt proud of the splendid sentiments of faith and patriotism the old man uttered. I was anxious he should go away and give me an opportunity to enthuse on his grand Celtic characteristics. From a cottage near by, came the opening chords of one of Moore's melodies 'The Coulin' played on a piano. The conversation ended, the old man contracted his brows in an expression of contempt. "There your Reverence," he exclaimed, "Isn't that the grandeur for you? That's Micky O'Donnell's daughter playing the pianney no less. Wish a God be with her poor ould father, 'tis far from pianneys he was reared." Needless to say my companions meaning smile confused me, and I did not wax eloquent or enthusiastic on "my venerable Irish peasant." I have often since lamented this

caustic trait and have seen it evidenced a thousand times from the cloaked coleen—tripping it so daintily to Mass or market, passing remarks by no means complimentary on her “upstart” neighbour, who has abandoned the cloak for the bonnet, to the “sacerdos” who, when a class-fellow has left the beaten track a little, and in his missionary career has developed initiative, exclaims at his presumption in having dared what better men were afraid to touch.

But Father Coleman followed his own lights, and had the satisfaction of knowing that his methods produced immediate fruit. His Church was always crowded. His people looked forward to his sermons. His sodalities and juvenile clubs worked a revolution for good ’mong the youth of his parish. He had fought his own fights nevertheless. Well-nigh discouraged by opposition and disappointments, he had sometimes wavered, and then the spectre of Canon Sheehan’s immortal “Daddy Dan” baulked his path “Cui Bono, Cui Bono”; but calling up his manliness and his will-power, he exorcised his mind, and then opposition and contradiction but stimulated him to keep on. His visionary standard had inscribed on it two mottoes, the one “Excelsior,” the other “Ad maj-

orem Dei gloriam," and so at the meridian of his life he had won universal respect. He had succeeded his old pastor to the charge of the mission where he had laboured as a curate. It was a model parish, but its pastor never rested on his oars, he was as strenuous now, as when fresh from the anointing of his sacerdotal ordination, he began his arduous career.

God bless them and watch over them, the priests of the twentieth century who have stepped into the vanguard and taken the apostolic standard from the old heroes. Their's are the grand sacerdotal characteristics of the old regime, the self-sacrificing heroism, the genial generosity, the absorbing love of Faith and Fatherland. But they have come equipped with characteristics of their own. They are of their time, alert, practical, business-like. Intent on their Divine Mission, the Glory of God and the Salvation of Souls, they would as willingly suffer persecution if so required, as did their martyred predecessors who poured out their heart's blood, mingled with Christ's blood on the Mass-rocks in old Ireland. Their methods seem new, their equipments strange to some of the old caste, but they are withal those best suited to the needs of a new generation and of a new age.

The garden-gate clicked. Father Coleman turned round to greet his guests. Frank and Norman flushed after their brisk walk from the station walked quickly towards him.

"Here we are, Father," Norman greeted. "I wanted to motor out, but Frank would have me come by train. This must be a half-holiday in town, the train we came by was packed. I can tell you Frank shan't persuade me to come by train again."

"Ha-ha! Listen to him Uncle. This is the young barrister who is going to astound Melbourne one of these days, by rushing away to a Jesuit novitiate in Ireland. Listen to him dilate on the inconveniences of crowded trains, as compared with the gliding luxury of an 'automobile. Don't you think Father, I am doing well in breaking him in.'"

Norman laughed a merry boyish laugh.

"So Norman, it is true then what Frank tells me. You are giving up everything and entering religion?"

Yes, Father: quite true. If I can arrange my departure to time with Frank's, I shall go with him to America and then shall leave him to enter the life I have chosen. To-morrow I tell my father

of my resolve. He will storm I know, but I cannot now be influenced, I must go."

The priest gazed with admiration on the earnest young fellow, and said feelingly :

"God bless you Norman! Yours is a grand vocation. I know you will find it hard to leave your home and friends, but I have no doubt you will be equal to the test. I need not ask you if you are happy in your great resolve, for I can see by your beaming face and buoyant spirits, that you are intensely so."

"Whatever will become of us Uncle; the remnant of the Inseparables, when we lose Norman. We shall be lost indeed without him."

"Oh, you will soon forget," Norman retorted playfully. "Victor is if I mistake not, head over heels in love with Violet Harding, George seems heart-whole yet; but you, my millionaire, when you meet your sister's friends in New York, the charming young 'Americaines,' you will soon forget poor me. What say you Father?"

"I agree with you, Norman," Father Coleman laughingly assented. "But I hardly think, no matter what new ties they make, your old friends will ever forget you."

"Yes Norman, you may rely on it," Frank said

earnestly. And old man, even if you are going away to be a Jesuit we shall meet again. You may be sent back to the Sunny South, who knows?"

The dinner-bell brought them back to the fact, that they were possessed of vigorous appetites.

"What do you think of our budding author, Father?" Norman queried archly as he looked across towards Frank. "Of course, you know all about your accomplished nephew's book. I can tell you he will be the literary lion of the season."

Father Coleman looked at Frank in incredulous astonishment.

"Well Norman, you are a fellow to entrust a secret to. However Uncle, I can forgive him, as I intended speaking of my novel to you this afternoon. The fact of the matter is, I have written and entrusted to the publishers, what you would describe as a Catholic novel. Norman has read the manuscript, and is well pleased with it. I have no reason to be sanguine in its regard, but it may do good even if it be not exactly a literary success."

"Frank, I can assure you, I am delighted that you have a taste for literary work of this kind, and have launched forth as a Catholic author.

My advice to you is, not to be discouraged even if your first attempt does not meet with favour. We want our educated Catholics to take up work of this kind, to cope with the evil that is wrought among our people by immoral, irreligious and atheistic works. The novel is made the vehicle of much that is anti-Catholic and anti-Christian, by writers of the present day. There are so many such writers, and their works are so popular, that they can issue their books at prices that put them within the reach of everybody. We want Catholic literature on the same lines, to counteract this evil propaganda of an irreligious press."

"Do you think then, Father," Norman queried, "that Catholics to any great extent read such literature as you condemn?"

"Not only do I think so, Norman, but I feel certain of it. Catholics go into a book-shop in the city, and are struck immediately with a row of books, with bright binding, with catchy titles and amazingly cheap. It is so easy to purchase such a book and Catholic literature is so very expensive, that they immediately invest. The language is bright, the style good, the descriptions fascinating. There is no very overt immoral passage or page, but there is a poison instilled all the

same that is subversive both of faith and virtue. No open attack is made on the Church, but there are doubts cleverly glossed over and intended to be conveyed. There are situations that are suggestive and sensuous. The reader is not the same after he has read the book, he has eaten the Apple and reaped the results, and I have no doubt, he or she will hasten to procure another of the same kind. Our Catholic Truth Society is doing good work to counteract the evil, but its pamphlets while excellent, are a bit too heavy to be attractive to the business man, or shop-girl, who reads on the train, going to and returning from work. What we require for such people, are works of fiction at cheap prices, with no direct bearing on dogmatic truths or moral obligations, yet cleverly alluding to and illustrating them."

"I should think Uncle, such works as you insist on as necessary, would be eagerly read by Protestants as well as Catholics." Frank said.

"Undoubtedly," Father Coleman answered. "I mean novels of a bright and wholesome type, not goody-goody literature, but strong and clean. They must touch on the tender passion of course, to be thoroughly popular, but they can work untold good in so doing, by depicting honourable

manly men, and pure, womanly women with a horror for all that is impure and corrupt."

"Father, is it not remarkable how popular Marie Corelli's books are," Norman exclaimed. "The fellows at the University simply raved over them. I can imagine what untold harm her novels would work among uneducated people."

"And they do Norman, Corelli's style is ravishing, her descriptions superb. Then the gross crimes she attributes to Catholic priests and dignitaries, the noble souls on the contrary she paints in her irreligious heroes and heroines, all this is simply ruinous to the uninstructed. Take for instance her 'Master Christian,' what a charnel-house of corruption she makes out the Church to be! What monsters Gherardi, Vergniaud, Moretti, and what angels by contrast Aubrey Leigh, Angela Sovrani and the socialist Gys Grandit. Then the visionary Cardinal Bonpre and the heavenly child Manuel are such exquisite creations. Do you know lads, there is a 'grand-dame,' a Catholic in my parish who will not come to Mass or the Sacraments since she read the 'Master Christian.' She says Corelli is her director, she has torn off the veil and shown her what we priests really are. I must say

she is a brainless, conceited woman, but still her's is a case in point."

"I daresay ignorant Catholics, not to mention non-Catholics believe the extravagant charges made against our clergy, as always occurring in places indefinite, by fanatical firebrands on certain occasions and published in the daily press," Frank suggested.

"Yes I am sure they do," Father Coleman replied. "Ah if we only had an independent Daily Catholic paper, not necessarily a religious paper, but a Daily, subsidised by Catholic money and supported by the Catholic body throughout the State. Not only would we be able to give the lie immediately to the calumnies published against us, but I am convinced, that the fact of such a big proportion of the people withdrawing their subscriptions, would teach the proprietors of our Daily Press a very salutary lesson. The sectarian strife mongers would soon cease their rabid howlings, when their utterances were unheeded by the papers."

"It is a shame," Norman interjected, "that in this new country, there should be such sectarian strife. I quite agree with you Father Coleman that the press, and a few designing politicians are

responsible for the existence of the ogre. I feel sure the majority of our non-Catholic fellow citizens, are broad-minded and liberal men."

"My experience thoroughly confirms what you say, Norman. In this parish of mine, and mind you my experience coincides with that of many of my brother-priests, whenever we hold bazaars or entertainments for Church purposes the Protestants are in many cases as liberal, in some cases, more so than some of our own people. Not only that, but many of them have expressed to me their disgust and disapproval, when those insulting Orange utterances were reported in the daily papers."

The two friends remained until after tea. The hours flew in interesting conversation. Father Coleman could converse on any topic. At length his nephew and Norman bade him good-bye, promising to visit him once again before they set out on their voyage.

The trains were crowded with theatre-goers as they journeyed back to the city. Somehow it chanced, that all that was squalid and revolting in the social life of the city was in evidence that night. Frank and Norman struggled into a compartment that was over-crowded with passengers.

The men were of the larrikin type, their remarks were coarse and lewd, the women factory girls—returning from a day's outing to their homes, tawdry and loud-voiced. At the Flinders Street station, they came on a group of 'Varsity students very much muddled, leading or dragging one of their number who was absolutely drunk. Out on the street the Salvation Army Regenerated were performing their revolting parody on religion, clapping their hands, clashing their cymbals, and singing hymns in which the Sacred Name sounded frequently, to the airs of music hall ditties. Of course all this was far worse than Norman's world ever had been, but still it caused him a kind of mental nausea. The world that had at one time been so alluring to him now seemed a living impersonation of evil and vice, a coarse wanton from whose impure caresses he must escape or else like the bride in Locksley Hall be defiled by the contact. The lines of Tennyson came to his memory—

“Yet it shall be, thou shalt lower to his level day
by day,

What is fine within thee, growing coarse to sym-
pathise with clay.”

Arrived at “Kincora” Norman said—

“Thank God Frank we are home, the city and

the chattering crowds in the streets suffocated me to-night. It is a relief to get back to this quiet retreat, away from the ghouls of the town, and the maudlin revellers on the streets.”



CHAPTER XIV.

Norman Interviews his Father.

“Well Norman, my boy!” Judge Marshall greeted heartily, as his favourite son entered the library, the morning after our friends had visited Father Coleman. “Your mother tells me you and Frank are going up to “Mundoona” this evening. I am glad. You want a long rest after the grinding for your last exam. You have indeed covered yourself with glory my son. Now Norman, I think before you start your practice, you ought to see the world; travel expands one’s mind so much and gives the final polish to an educated man.”

“It is about my going home that I have come to see you this morning, father,” Norman explained. “Frank Coleman sails for America early next month. I have decided to go with him.”

“An excellent idea, Norman, excellent indeed. Coleman is a clever young fellow, and will be a splendid companion. Perhaps, you scheming young rascal” he said jestingly, “you intend to

win his sister and her fortune, and bring us back a wealthy heiress as your bride."

"Indeed, Father, I have no such intentions," Norman answered seriously. "Neither do I think I shall return. In short Father, I wish to tell you that I am going home to enter a Jesuit novitiate."

Judge Marshall rose to his feet dumb-founded. "What Norman! You a Jesuit! What madness is this. Come sir, tell me this is a jest."

"It is no jest Father, it is just the truth. I have made up my mind. I am convinced that this is my vocation, and no matter how much I relinquish or how much I may lose, I am determined to follow God's call."

The Judge grew purple with passion. He lost all control of himself and burst into a storm of rage and reproach. Poor Norman! It was a fearful ordeal for him, but he with head erect and pale set face, listened patiently until his parent had exhausted his anger.

"Father you are forgetting yourself," he answered in a voice of quiet dignity. "Had you not stifled your better nature, far from resenting my resolution you would deem it an honour that God calls me, your son, to such a holy life. Nothing

you can say or do will alter my decision. I am of age and at liberty to choose my own career. Though nothing can shake my determination now, the parting with you, mother, Victor and Moira will be hard indeed. Your attitude will render it doubly bitter."

"Norman you are selfish. Have you no thought of what a blow you have given me? Norman do not leave me. You have always been my dearest child, my pride. I have through my own fault perhaps alienated the affections of Victor and Moira, but you I have loved with an intensity you know nought of. My son, my boy, I am growing old. I want you near me. Norman do not go."

Norman reeled. This passionate pleading was harder, a thousand times harder to bear than the storm of anger that had preceded it, but he was unmoved in his determination.

"Father I would obey you if I could, but God has prior claims on me. I must go."

"Well then go, and when you have gone never darken my door again. I would rather see you dead Norman," he said in a hard stern voice "than that you should become a Jesuit. But go, I will arrange with your mother for all the necessary ex-

penses. I owe it to my pride that you have what you require, but remember, you are no longer my son. Go and do not see me again."

"Father," Norman said in a voice hoarse with emotion, "You are breaking my heart, but be it as you wish. I shall always pray for you. You will repent when I am gone how you have treated the son you say you love so much."

He staggered out of the room and down the stairs. On the landing he met his mother. She looked into his face and divined what had occurred.

"Norman, My darling! My hero! be brave," she said as she flung her arms round him and kissed his brow, "God will comfort you."

"Mother I will try, but now I must go to my God, and alone before the Tabernacle endure this agony. Then I shall return, strong and brave, comforted by the love of the Divine Heart."

To the Church Norman went. There before the Adorable Presence, he knelt down, his heart throbbing with wounded, outraged love.

"Oh God! Oh Sweet Jesus this is hard to bear," he groaned. "Must I go away and never again hear his voice! Oh God, Thy will before every-

thing, but Oh loving Saviour, give me strength to endure this pain."

For two long hours he endured his Gethsemane, then he arose comforted again, a sacred command thrilling through his soul like sweetest music :

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." "Better is one day in Thy Courts above thousands." "I have chosen to be an abject in the House of my God rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners." "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, he cannot be My disciple."

If Norman's anguish after the interview with his father was great, he had withal the consciousness of being in the right, but the Judge had no such solace.

Scarce had Norman left the house when he stood up and cried out :

"Oh Norman my child, my boy do not part with me thus. Come back, come back!"

Before this grief of his, he felt like an old and infirm man. Had Victor made the announcement Norman had just spoken, the Judge would not have been grieved, but Norman for whom and on whom he had counted such great things! It was more than he could bear. If he would only then

have gone to his son and be reconciled, what joy it would have given Norman, and what balm to his own wordly heart. But he did not go. He drew himself together proudly, sternly.

“Bah! I am weaker than I thought,” he muttered. Let him go. I had thought to enjoy in his successes my own triumphs over again, but I am self-sufficient. “Transeat” for ever this morning’s scene.”

He strode from the library to his room, where he dressed for the city and went out. He ordered his chaffeur to bring round his car and take him to the law-courts. Try as he would all the day, when listening to the pleaders at the court, over his coffee and cigars at Scott’s—when discussing with his friends after lunch, the current topics and the politics of the day, at the theatre that night, and later at his club, everywhere Norman’s white, set face haunted him and his words still rang reproachfully in his ears. “Father I would obey you if I could, but God has prior claims on me, I must go.”

Conscience was again clamouring within him. In spite of himself he realized that he had paid a heavy price for his idol of wordly prosperity—the affections of those who loved him best wounded by

his irreligion, an insistent consciousness that the further he drifted from old obligations the more did he suffer in his own esteem. Here was a man of his time, infected with the spirit of his age, living but for worldly honour and an ephemeral fame as unsubstantial and fleeting as the Fata Morgana seen by awe-stricken peasants on the waters of Messina, or the shadowy Hy-Brazil sometimes visible across the Atlantic from the wild coast of the West of Ireland. For a time he had tried to serve two masters, God and Mammon, with a divided service; but their interests were opposed and could not be co-ordinated, and so the more completely he became absorbed in toiling on from one pinnacle of success to another, the more did his spiritual aspirations become eliminated. A materialistic man of a progressive age, honoured, wealthy, powerful, yet never more miserable than now, when at the zenith of his power, Judge Marshall against his will found that there is no real happiness for him, who has bartered God-given gifts, for the lotus fruit of the world.

“Hallo Judge! Have you heard the news about Jack Harding of ‘Mundoona?’” Fred Bradshawe, a Western district squatter enquired at the Club that evening.

"No Fred! It must be something serious, you seem so excited. My son, Victor is up at "Mundoona" at present. Tell me what has occurred. Has Harding met with an accident?"

"No, it would be better if he had, the damned crank," Bradshawe growled, "What the devil do you think Marshall? Harding has decided to stand for the Federal and launch into politics wearing the Labour Ticket. By——, it has come to a sorry pass when our own class desert us and go over to the camp of those cursed Socialists."

"By Jove, Bradshawe, this is news! But Browning will have a walk over up there. I know the Labour people will make a hard fight for that electorate, but Indi is a stronghold of farmers and conservatives, they have too deep-rooted a fear of a Labour Government coming into power, to admit of any possibility of success for a Labour candidate."

"Do not be over-confident, Judge. The miners in some of the towns up there, have a big vote. Besides there is a big Labour vote in the principal towns of the electorate. Browning got a severe shake from the Labour man at the last election, though the fellow was a wretched speaker and practically unknown. Harding is a formidable

foe. He is very popular with all classes, and the fact that he is a big landowner himself will tell considerably in his favour."

"Well Bradshawe, you know my political creed too well to suspect that I am in favour of a Labour Government. But really should you be defeated, I cannot tender very much sympathy. This Fusion business has disgusted the people, and rightly so. It is patent to all true Australians that there is very little genuine patriotism in our representatives. Zeal for their own individual advancement and gain, seems paramount to zeal for the good of this young nation. If the Labour Party do win the victory at the coming contest, it will be well for the country if among a set of fanatical extremists they have men like John Harding among their ranks to temper their tendencies. I am assured that he has thrown in his career with the Labour Party because he deems them the more honest politicians in this country. He may be a Labour man but is certainly not a Socialist."

CHAPTER XV.

Spring in the Bush.

Spring is a time of beauty in all lands, but a season that has its peculiar beauties in each. In Victoria Spring is pre-eminently the loveliest season. The wide ranges of pasture land are softly green. The rivers and the creeks flow by banks golden with wattle-bloom, the perfume of the wattle is everywhere. The wheat fields are seas of billowy verdure. The sun shines with a brightness that is invigorating. The plumage of the bush-birds seems richer and brighter than in the dusty summer. The Australian thrush warbles his soft call to his mate all the day. It is a season of promise, a healthful bracing time, when the children of the South have their blood enriched and their bodies strengthened before the fierce enervating heat of the summer sets in.

“Mundoona” looked its gayest and brightest in its Spring Robes when the Inseparables were again gathered together there for a week before the parting. The years since we first beheld them, four

romping boys, had changed them somewhat. The promise of their boyhood was fulfilled, they had grown into splendid types of young manhood. Their minds had been broadened by education and experience, but their hearts were as unsullied as when we first met them. Again the happy family party was assembled on the wide verandah; this time it was in the bright glow of the afternoon sun instead of the silvery light of the summer moon. John Harding was smoking placidly in a luxurious verandah-chair. His wife was seated near by working assiduously at some elaborate embroidery. Frank and George were seated on the verandah steps. Norman swung indolently in a hammock. Down the lawn, where beds of golden daffodils, clusters of Arum lilies and shrubs of scarlet and white camelias made gleams of bright colour on the soft green, Victor and Violet were laughing as they bent over the beds and culled choice tributes from each glowing plot.

Mrs Harding looked up from her work to watch them every now and then and smiled a quiet smile of happiness. Victor Marshall on the previous day had asked and obtained permission from the genial master and mistress of "Mundoona" to plead his suit to their daughter. That his suit

had been successful, was evident from the beaming faces of the young doctor and the fair girl who was his companion. Up from the river at the back came a wealth of perfume from the groves of golden wattle that fringed the stream.

"Yes, we sail next Monday week," Frank Coleman was saying. Next Wednesday we leave for Sydney where we shall spend the intervening time visiting some of our old school-mates and some of the old masters at Xavier's, now at River-view."

"What a pity George is not coming with us Mr. Harding," Norman exclaimed, "Frank will find it dull without one of the Inseparables. You know I must get on to Ireland, after a short stay with him in the States."

"Well Norman, it is a pity, but I urged George to go with you and take a trip to the old world however he will not hear of it."

"No Father," George answered, "There's any amount of time for that trip. You know lads, I should like ever so much to accompany you, but I have become such a capable squatter, that Father can't do without me. Eh, Dad! isn't it a fact?

Now that you intend going in for politics, I shall be more indispensable than ever.

Ha, you rascal, you know you have been so active that I have given over the management of things to you altogether. He has ousted his poor old father lads—this stalwart six-footer of mine, so lest I should get rusty altogether, I have promised to fight the next election for the Labour Party against old Browning.”

“More power, Mr Harding,” Frank exclaimed. What a pity Norman and I wont be here, to join in the rejoicings when you win the seat.”

I shall not be disappointed if I am defeated, I certainly have more peace of mind now than I can hope to have when I plunge into the vortex of politics ; but lads I have a genuine Australian's love for this great country of ours, and feel ever so indignant that those into whose hands we have entrusted the power of shaping her destiny, are so supine and inert, in the face of menacing perils. Why, it is just maddening to think, how little we the men of the present day are doing to preserve for our children this great continent with its vast resources. Here we are a handful of people comparatively, along the sea border, and the great interior, the centre of the continent is undeveloped

and uninhabited. We want emigration, we want people to come from other lands to settle on the waste unutilized territory, to develop its resources, to increase and multiply. Nowadays our statesmen are wearying us with much ado about Naval Defence and are spending millions of money in procuring a few Dreadnoughts, which considering the immense extent of coast to be protected, should an invader menace us, would be as inefficient as a child's fleet of toy boats.

"But Father," George interposed, "these battle-ships are but the nucleus of a mighty armada, which will be ours in time."

"Gallery-talk, my son, nothing more," Mr Harding answered. "Far better had the money spent in their construction and equipment, been employed in bringing emigrants to our shores in building railways and opening up lands. I consider every score of thrifty, industrious immigrants imported to our shores more advantageous to the country economically than a fully-equipped battleship. We Australians are a fine race. I have no patience with those who decry us as indolent and pleasure-loving ; but we must admit at the same time that we are not making the most of this great continent of ours. Our orators and public speakers in

their flowing rhetoric speak of "Our great potentialities," but our potentialities will take a long time to become actualities, if we do not make it our chief aim to bring people from other countries, to add to our population and develop the country's stagnant resources. The Oriental peril, we do not consider as seriously as we should. Japan wants an outlet for her teeming millions. Rumour has it that this dusky race knows the geography of our unprotected shores thoroughly, and is awaiting but a favourable opportunity to invade our sunny continent. Our best defence should be a rapidly increasing population, then later on, when we are great in numbers, we can set about the building of an armament."

"I agree with you, Mr Harding," Frank Coleman assented, "I have wondered at the indolence of our Government in neglecting to encourage emigrants. Our neglect in this respect is earning for us among the nations a character of stupid selfishness, more especially when Canada, with neither our resources nor our climate, is advertising herself so elaborately, and bringing such a rush of immigrants to her shores. I like every genuine Irishman of the present day, regret the adverse conditions which compel thousands of my country-

men to cross to America every year, but as an Australian I bewail the fact that we do not secure those splendid men and women for our own country. What a healthy, clean race they would found and bequeath to the land of their adoption."

"So I have often thought, Frank," Mr Harding resumed, "But we Australians are selfish in our narrow-minded endeavour to keep this great continent to ourselves, a mere handful of people when compared with the millions it could support. When a politician on an electioneering canvass speaks of the evident necessity for emigration you hear several ninny-headed interjectors cry out: "What do we want with emigrants? We can't find work for our own unemployed."

"It seems to me," Norman urged that we Australians are too imperialistic in our politics. We have not enough national sentiment. It is always the Empire, the great British Empire with us, when it is not Victoria or New South Wales or our own individual State, but seldom or ever this great Australia which ought to be our proudest boast and claim our most loyal attachment. At the State schools the children are told in season and out of season to honour the Imperial Flag, the Union Jack, they apostrophise it in Rudyard

Kipling's jingling rhapsodies, but many of them can scarce tell you what the Australian Flag is. It is all deplorable provincialism."

"I am indeed pleased, Norman to hear one of the rising generation express my own sentiments so strongly," Mr Harding exclaimed. If there is anything that disgusts me, it is this absurd jingoism. All honour and praise to the Mother-Country, but let us not sink to the level of mere provincials. Let us aid and assist in as far as we can Old England when in a just cause she requires our assistance. Good Heavens! How mad this jingoism made us at the time of the Boer war, when the news was cabled of the relief of Ladysmith. Sensible respectable citizens became lunatics or libertines, in their rejoicings at the repulse of a brave people, who fought so valiantly for rights since conceded. Talking of the Boer War, some of the valiant Australians whom we feted and sent off with such flourishing of trumpets, to South Africa, were the perpetrators of deeds that will leave a stain for many a day, on the new escutcheons of this Australia of ours."

Mrs Harding put down her work at this juncture and remonstrated :

"Well goodness knows, John we have had

enough politics to last us for a month. Please give it a rest and talk of something lighter."

John Harding laughed. The young fellows cried out: "Oh a thousands pardons, Auntie, we have been very inconsiderate. We shall fine Uncle if he talks politics during the next few days."

"George, call out to that amorous pair down there," Mrs Harding said with a smile. "I want Violet to help me in the dining-room."

"Well, lads! I must go and have a look at the men," Mr Harding yawned as he rose leisurely from his chair.

"Come boys," George urged, "We must have a walk before dinner."

The Inseparables strolled down the avenue along a vista of golden sunlight.

Mrs Harding gazing at them breathed a prayer: "God bless them, my four stainless knights. May they always walk along the sunshine of honour and truth."

CHAPTER XVI.

Moira Marshall.

The same evening and at the very same hour that our friends walked along the sun-kissed avenue at "Mundoona," Moira Marshall was praying with all the fervour of her virginal soul before the high-altar of her favourite church. Outside, her maid waited in the little pony phaeton, a gift from the Judge to his beautiful daughter on her last birthday. The glory of the setting sun filled the streets of the city, and gilded the spires and turrets of God's House. In a flood of radiance it poured through the pictured sanctuary windows weaving bright patterns of ruby, emerald, gold and amethyst on the marble-tiled floor. Then it sank in the heavens, but in the first twilight the sacred subject of the beautiful window, stood out more vividly than in the dazzling splendours of the sunset. The dying Saviour on the cross, head upraised and eyes agonized. Beside him the patient Mother of Sorrows and the sweet-faced John, and at the foot of the Rood, the weeping golden-hair-

ed Magdalen. There 'twas vividly limned 'gainst the darkening sky, the picture of the Sublimest Sacrifice the world has ever beheld. And on the altar-throne, the very same Agnus Dei in His Eucharistic presence, listened in love to the sacrifice of the kneeling girl near the sanctuary rails.

What was the sacrifice?

"O Cor Amoris Victima," was the scroll richly embroidered on the altar cloth. It was the ejaculation likewise that went forth from the heart of the young adorer to the Divine Heart within the tabernacle, calling for grace and help from the Prisoner of Love, to carry out her immolation of herself.

Moira Marshall's ardent desire for the last two years, had been to enter religion, to become a nun, and in the convent where she had been educated and brought up, a fair lily in God's garden, to join the black-robed sisters in their adorations before the Most Holy Sacrament to teach other young girls as she herself had been taught, to send them forth into the world, fit to combat its temptations, and to fulfil their duties therein. She longed for the time when she could leave the world, and give herself entirely to God. Her father's antagonism to Norman's holy resolve, convinced

her that not until she came of age, could she gain the desire of her heart.

Moirra loved her Father ardently. He had always been so kind, so fond, so lavish in his gifts to her, but then there was always the barrier between them, the one cloud over her home, his infidelity to his church. A week ago a thought had suddenly flashed through her mind, and though the very idea of what it suggested was hateful to her, the thought remained. She had prayed for light and guidance and this evening offered up the sacrifice the thought had urged.

With her Mother Moirra had often visited the Good Shepherd Convent at Abbotsford. Always full of reverence for the Sisters she nevertheless shrank in loathing from the work of charity to which they devoted their lives. Moirra could not bear contact with the poor fallen creatures whom these holy women strove to regenerate. If ever the remotest thought of such a vocation for herself, suggested itself, she revolted against it and dismissed it at once. Lately when praying with all the pleading of her generous heart, for grace and repentance for her erring Father, when promising that she would make any sacrifice, should her prayer be answered, this was the sacrifice that

immediately presented itself. At first she cried out in anguish, "Not this, Oh not this, my God! Take anything, everything, my life even, but do not ask me to do this against which my whole soul revolts." But there was no comfort, no sympathy. The suffering depicted on the face of the Man of Sorrows in the picture before her, seemed to rebuke her, but she did not yield. In her perplexity she had recourse to her friend, the saintly Mother Superior at the Convent. The old nun said to her :

"My darling child! perhaps this is the sacrifice God wants from you. After all in your desire to come to us here, you have been choosing the way most pleasing to yourself in which you should serve Him. He may want you to serve Him in a life not so entirely in accordance with your own desires. We should hate to lose you, my child, but this is not perhaps the home which God wishes you to enter. Pray my child and strive to conquer this aversion you feel, I am sure you will then be happy."

Moira left her old friend soothed and comforted. All the way home and ever since, the old nun's words had dwelt in her memory. Had she not been selecting for herself the easiest way, the less

thorny path, along which to follow the King of Martyrs? Her heart pleaded guilty. To-day in the Church she had come to pay her evening visit and a Voice from the Tabernacle spoke to her soul. She submitted. She resolved to make the sacrifice, and under the patronage of the Good Shepherd, to devote her life to the bringing back to the fold, the most wayward and most abandoned sheep. The sacrifice made, she experienced a wonderful feeling of peace, she felt moreover that her offering was accepted, and that her Father would in time be brought back to grace.

There was another person in the Church whose thoughts and feelings were altogether out of harmony with the holy place. Ernest Cosgrove had gone out to Camberwell that evening, resolved to see Moira and ask her hand. Walking past the Jesuit Church at Glenferrie as Moira drove up, he saw her leave the phaeton and enter the sacred edifice.

"Now," he thought "is my opportunity. It will be easier to approach her here, than at "Kincora" where under the guardianship of that icicle, her Mother, it may be impossible for me to obtain an interview."

And so he entered the Church. He sat impat-

iently down near the door, and chafed and fumed during the long time the girl knelt unconscious of his presence.

When she at length arose, he stepped out into the porch and there interrupted her.

“Good evening, Miss Marshall. I saw you enter the Church as I was coming on to the station, and as I was anxious to have an interview with you, I decided to come here and wait for you. I hope you remembered in your prayers a poor sinner.”

“I am afraid Dr. Cosgrove, I was too much engrossed in praying for myself, to think of anybody else,” Moira answered brightly.

“Ah well! Cosgrove sighed, “It would be too much for a poor fellow like me, to expect that you could spare me a thought. Miss Marshall, Moira, I have sought you here to tell you how much I love you, and to ask you if there is any hope for me.”

The girl was dumb-founded at this sudden declaration, so entirely unexpected. Taking her distress as a favourable token, Cosgrove pleaded all the more.

At length recovering her self-possession she said with quiet dignity :

“Dr. Cosgrove, I beg of you to desist. You are

paining me more than I can say. I could never become your wife, it is absolutely impossible."

Her voice and manner were so decisive, that Cosgrove stood abashed. Then his rage and disappointment got the better of him. He exclaimed insolently :

"I might have known Miss Marshall what your answer would be. I have been a fool for my pains. Doubtless," he sneered "though I stand well enough in your Father's esteem, you have been prejudiced against me by your brother Victor, or that paragon of excellence, Frank Coleman."

"Sir!" Moira exclaimed, "you forget yourself. Neither my brother nor the gentleman you have mentioned, have ever discussed you with me in any way. This interview is exceedingly painful to me, I must bid you good evening."

Hurt and indignant she got into the phaeton. He did not have the courtesy to assist her, but a prey to rage the most furious, he gnashed his teeth as he watched her drive away.

"So I have lost her," he hissed. "Curse her a thousand times. She is doubtless affianced to that fellow Coleman. Hell! If I had that fellow in my power for one day how I would make him suffer and gloat over him. What shall I do? My cre-

ditors are daily becoming more insistent. I must at any rate take this wife of mine away. She must be got rid of, no matter what occurs."

The next evening Cosgrove and the poor girl who little guessed his sinister purpose sailed for Sydney.



CHAPTER XVII.

Nemesis.

Frank Coleman and Norman Marshall bade adieu to their friends, and set out on their long voyage. For poor Norman, the ordeal of parting with his loved ones was severe indeed. The trial was all the harder inasmuch as his Father had remained obdurate to the last and refused to see him. But there was much to gladden and comfort him. His sister Moira had informed him of her intentions and Norman was glad that the fair girl would be safe from the world's cares within the convent walls. His Mother kissed him good-bye with a glad smile through her tears, she was too grateful to God for His goodness towards her boy, to indulge in sorrow at his departure. Somehow the news of his renunciation of a future so full of promise had been circulated very quickly. Instead of sneering disapproval his choice had excited genuine admiration and sincere respect in his old school-mates, and many of his contemporaries at the University. A host of friends had assembled

on the pier to wish him God-speed. Father Coleman, Frank's uncle and Father Hastings, their former superior at Xavier's were there. The last to say good-bye, and to wring their hands in a strong clasp of truest friendship, were Victor and George.

"Good-bye, Norman, my brother," Victor said in a broken voice. God knows, I shall miss you, but we will meet again Normy, and till then we will be together in spirit."

"Good-bye, Norman old man. May God ever bless you." Good-bye Frank, and come back soon. Remember lads," George continued with emotion "though we must part, our friendship will always bind us, we shall always be the Inseparables."

The two travellers having decided to spend a few days in the Harbour City, before they should sail for America, secured rooms at the Metropole a fine hotel only a few minutes walk from the Circular Quays. In the evening they strolled down the Quays and got on board a ferry-boat bound for Manly. The night was lovely. The boat glided over the rippling waters framed as they were by the myriad lights of the city and suburbs. Ferry-boats and craft innumerable all illuminated glided in and out the many coves and creeks. They seem-

ed like huge glow-worms and the whole scene seemed like fairy-land. Passing by the heads, a strong fresh breeze blew in from the ocean. It was fresh and bracing though perhaps a trifle sharp. Norman and Frank buttoned their over-coats and pulled their caps over their brows and then whiffed the breeze into their lungs.

“Well Norman, it’s no wonder indeed these Sydney folk boast so much about their harbour,” Frank exclaimed. “When coming in the heads this morning, I thought I had never beheld so enchanting a scene. To-night with these fairy-boats gliding about everywhere, and the myriad lights from the shore reflected in the waters, it is more entrancing still.”

“Say Frank, there’s Manly College. See, that building on the summit of the hill. What a glorious site! The students must be in their rooms for every window is lit up.”

“Poor beggars!” Frank exclaimed, “I bet they are utterly oblivious of the scenery just now. I daresay they are puzzling their brains over ponderous tomes of Philosophy or Theology. Some of our old mates at Xavier’s, are students at Manly still Norman, we must visit them to-morrow if possible.”

A lady and gentleman passed by them on their promenade along the deck and stopped close by.

"Say Frank," Norman exclaimed in a whisper, "Keep still, that fellow is Ernest Cosgrove. I do not wish him to recognise us." "Hush."

"Ernest I do not feel strong enough to walk very far to-night, but if you think I can manage it I shall attempt it," Cosgrove's companion was saying.

"Of course you can Helen," Cosgrove answered. "You can lean on me the whole way. The bracing breeze from the ocean will do you good, and the exercise will enable you to sleep to-night. You will enjoy the view from the cliffs. The vast extent of ocean bathed in the moonlight is a grand sight, one worth seeing indeed."

"Good Heavens! Norman," Frank exclaimed. "Who can the girl be? They seem like husband and wife."

Just then Cosgrove turned round. There was such a murderous look in his face that the two friends shuddered at the sight of it. He paid no heed to the muffled figures near by, but turned away and taking the girl's arm led her down the companion-way, as the boat was drawing near the Manly pier.

Norman bethought him of the scene in the Club Room on the night of Monsieur Henrion's seance. He remembered Cosgrove's terror at the whispered communication of Henrion. Somehow he connected the lady with Cosgrove on the boat, with that night's revelation.

"Frank," he said, "that girl seems very ill, dying in fact. Cosgrove must have some queer motive in urging her to walk round to the cliffs at this hour. I say, keep them in sight, we must follow them."

"Right, Norman! I remember seeing that girl with him, at a theatre in Melbourne four years ago. I must say she is sadly changed in appearance. His associates and his escapades are nothing to us, still I think we had better keep him within range to-night."

Mid the bustle and the crowd on the pier, they lost sight of Cosgrove and his companion, but they soon observed them again, going up the steep road to the back of the town, towards the ocean beach and the cliffs.

"Norman," Frank said, "That man over there talking to the constable, is I think a policeman in plain clothes. If there is nothing amiss, we are making regular fools of ourselves, but should there

be anything wrong it will be well to have him with us. Cosgrove and the lady are going very slowly. You keep your eye on them while I ask this man to accompany us.

Standing on the side-walk was a tall military-looking man in a dark overcoat in animated conversation with a uniformed policeman.

Frank went over to the pair and addressed the man dressed as a civilian.

"Pardon me, sir," he said, "but may I ask if you are a constable?"

The man eyed him keenly and satisfied with the scrutiny answered—

"Yes, sir!" I am. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Well you may think I am taking you on a wild-goose chase," Frank answered. "Coming out on the boat from the city, I and my friend recognised an acquaintance of ours from Melbourne, whose character is not the very best. With him is a young lady apparently in extreme ill-health. We overheard the fellow urging her to accompany him round to the cliffs. It struck us that in urging her to undertake such a stiff walk, in her weak state, and at this hour the fellow must have some crooked business in view. My friend has gone on

ahead and is keeping the pair in sight. I ask you to come instead of your friend, because you are not in uniform, and will attract less attention."

"I shall certainly accompany you, sir," the man replied. "If there's nothing wrong, well the walk won't hurt me ; if there is, I shall be delighted to give you any assistance I can."

They soon overtook Norman. Cosgrove and his companion were some distance ahead.

"I say, gentlemen," the officer said, "they must intend to go round to the cliffs at the back of the College. We must not allow him to suspect he is being followed. Let us keep in near the shadow of the wall. Once off the road we can easily elude observation."

Ernest Cosgrove had murderous designs indeed in bringing his wife to Manly that night. He had been kind to her since their arrival in Sydney, but he saw very little of her. He absented himself from the villa occupied by Mrs Wallace on the plea of business at the hospitals, but during his short visits to his aunt's, he was so attentive to Helen, and so apparently repentant, that the girl suspected nothing. The interim between his visits, had been spent by him in reckless indulgence, and wild debauchery. Moira Marshall's rejection of

him had maddened Cosgrove and made him desperate. He determined to leave the country. His embarrassments were too numerous to admit of any other course, but though he knew that his wife was at death's door, he determined to run no risks in her regard. A devil within him urged against all reason that she should be got rid of come what would, and now he would execute his murderous deed.

When they were but a short distance from the edge of the cliff. Helen grew faint.

"Oh Ernest," she gasped, "I feel so weak. Do let me rest here awhile."

All the brute in him was now in the ascendant. Savage, with the opportunity he had so long wished for at hand, he was a demon incarnate. Now there was no longer need for pretence.

"Come along," he growled roughly as he scowled at the poor weak girl. "By hell, do you think I have been waiting this opportunity for months to fail in my purpose now? I hate you. Why the devil did you not remain in America out of my way? Come on you may as well die now as in a few weeks' time."

Numb with horror, Helen looked up into his

awful face. Then she realized how she had been duped.

"Ernest! my God, Ernest!" she pleaded, "You would not murder me. Surely you are not such a devil."

"Damn you, come on," he hissed.

She struggled and screamed, but he put his hand brutally over her mouth and dragged her on. They were but a few yards from the edge of the rocky cliff, the breakers boomed sullenly below and the wet spray dashed across their faces. The girl had ceased to struggle and was commending her soul to God. Another minute and the angry waves would have engulfed her, but then a leap and a blow.

"You hound!" Frank Coleman cried. "You devil! must you add murder to your other dastardly deeds?"

Cosgrove turned round abruptly after he had been flung aside.

"Coleman you!" he exclaimed, "You again! Ye gods, what a grand chance. By hell, you shall go with her to feed the sharks."

He had covered Frank with a pistol and fired as he finished speaking. But Coleman's angel watched over him. The weapon did not go off.

Cosgrove in his maudlin state had neglected to load it, before he had set out from the city. Utterly desperate now he flung the thing from him, and was about to grapple with his wife's rescuer. But Norman and the detective came running towards them, and the would-be murderer stood at bay.

"So Frank Coleman, I have to cry 'check' to you," he said. "I have hated you, since you first turned the Marshalls and George Harding against me, that time at 'Mundoona.' But you will never gloat over my disgrace. If there is a hell I shall meet you there. Good-bye."

He leaped over the edge of the rocky cliff. There was a dull splash from the angry greenish-white waters. The three witnesses of the awful tragedy looked over the edge. A sea-bird screamed out a wierd call, and circled round the rocky curve. Then the waves dashed in as before, the salt spray rose in white clouds, and there was nought to mark the last wild act of the misguided Ernest Cosgrove.

Sick, palsied with horror, Norman and Frank drew back from the edge of the cliff. Even the police-officer, hardened as he was to such things, shuddered. Then in a calm practical tone that

acted as a restorative to the sickened faculties of his companions. He said :

“Well gentlemen, that is the end of the ruffian. There is no chance of recovering his body from that whirl-pool down there. Let us see what we can do for the lady.”

Frank and Norman set to work to restore Helen from her death-like swoon. The officer set off to the town for assistance. When they had brought her to the hospital, she thanked them for their bravery in rescuing her from so awful a death. She made no enquiries about Cosgrove, and they told her nothing. She told them the story of her ruined life and asked them to wire for her friend Clare Cullen. Two days later her friend arrived a few hours before Helen's death. Her end was very peaceful. Her rescuers followed her remains to their last resting-place. The next day Frank and Norman sailed for America, glad to get away from the scene of the awful tragedy they had witnessed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Workings of Grace.

Frank and Norman had been gone a fortnight. The full account of the tragic occurrence at Manly had been published in the Melbourne papers. The appalling exposure of Cosgrove's character, his cruelty towards his young wife, his desertion and then his unsuccessful attempt to murder her, climaxed by his deliberate suicide, came as an awful shock to those who had known him intimately.

At "Kincora" and "Mundoona" prayers of heartfelt gratitude were offered up to the Good God, who had preserved Norman and Frank safe from Cosgrove's mad attack. The tragic event produced perhaps a greater effect on Judge Marshall, than on any of our friends, though he did not even refer to it in his own home. He had aged very much since that day a few weeks before, when he sent away his son with such hard unnatural words. Cosgrove's terrible end caused him to think very seriously. He had admired the young fellow so much, indeed he had no idea how

vicious Cosgrove was until the last chapter of the rogue's life had revealed his utter profligacy. The Judge had always received him at "Kincora" as a welcome guest, and lauded him to his own sons as an ideal young gentleman. He had even fostered a hope that Moira would marry Cosgrove. "Good God," he asked himself, "what if she had? What if she had married him when his lawful wife was living?" The thought was so terrible, that in spite of himself the Judge found himself thanking God for his child's preservation from a disgrace worse than death.

Other thoughts too kept agitating his mind those days. He realized how joyless his life was becoming. This last unnatural act of his in disowning Norman because he but followed a holy and a high vocation made his domestic relations more strained than ever. Victor in the vigor of his manly, unflinching faith had always while respectful to his father in every way manifested in his manner a strong indignation towards him because of his defection from his Church. The Judge loved the manly young fellow, and now that Norman's departure had left a void in the father's heart, longed more than ever that the wall of reserve he had built up between Victor and him-

self, should be broken down. But his pride still held him back, from obeying the voice of parental affection, though his life became more joyless day by day.

Mrs Marshall still hoped and prayed. Moira was her mother's best comforter since Norman left. With a most beautiful faith, the young girl was confident that God had listened to her promise, and accepted her sacrifice, that very soon her father would be reconciled with his Church, and that there would be peace and happiness in her home once more. She had visited the convent at Abbotsford almost daily since Norman left. Already the old repugnance to the duties of the Good Shepherd nuns was wearing away. The sisters charmed her more than ever. The beautiful convent, its numerous buildings and pleasant gardens seemed such a City of Peace. At every visit, she asked to be brought to the penitents. Some of these who had been inmates for years were so enthusiastic about the goodness of the nuns, so grateful to God for this holy haven of prayer and penance, that the young girl was deeply touched. She read in their faces the perfect peace of their souls, and thought how glorious in God's sight, must be the work which had transformed into

saints, the once reckless profligates, and unblushing traffickers in sin, the shame of their sex, as revolting in their degraded womanhood as were those frenzied furies of the French Revolution, the "petroleuses" and the "tricoteusses" in the Parisian pandemonium, when the men and women of the Commune became more bestial than the beasts, in gross licence and cruel brutality.

Ah those holy white-robed spouses of the Good Shepherd! How little the world knows of the heroism of their lives of sacrifice. How rosy and peaceful the tenor of their lives seems to us when they introduce to us those dear "children" as they so lovingly style them, and we are glad when we behold even in the faces of those rescued women, the evidences of the inward purity which years of repentance have brought to their once sullied souls. Ah but do we ever realize that this work of God-inspired charity was not wrought in a day, or a month, or a year; that these holy nuns more valiant than Judith, have had to wage warfare with the forces of hell and the reiterated uprisings of the basest human passions, before their penitent children were finally wrested from slavery, and led securely to the fold of the Good Shepherd? How many an obscene word, how many a

gross insult, how many an outburst of passion, have these gentle ladies had to listen to and endure, ere the sinners were indeed made saints. Heroic the work, glorious the results and divine the faith that inspires such sublime vocations.

The home group save for Norman's absence, was complete one evening, two weeks' after our friends had sailed from Sydney. The Judge, to the delight of his wife and children had strolled in after dinner to the little parlour, where the family assembled every evening when by themselves. Near the piano Moira, Victor and his fiancée Violet Harding were chatting merrily. George Harding was detailing to Mrs Marshall the enthusiastic receptions accorded to his father, on his electioneering canvass. Father Coleman, who was a frequent visitor at "Kincora," was discussing Frank's and Norman's narrow escape from death or serious injury, in the fracas with Cosgrove at Manly.

"Yes indeed, the youngsters were fortunate," the Judge said, "But Father Coleman, please do not mention Norman's name to me again. He has gone against my dearest wishes, and I have done with him."

"Judge, you are very unjust in your attitude towards Norman. He is but following his voca-

tion. You ought to be proud that God has called a son of yours to such a holy state."

"I envy you your simple faith, Father, in this matter of vocations, as well as in many other matters I myself believed in at one time. But pleasant as my old faith was, I must say that at present I can only smile, when I hear people speak of supernatural influences of any kind. Modern science, Father has ruled the supernatural world out of existence."

"So this is what you have come to Judge Marshall!" Father Coleman exclaimed indignantly. You have drifted into utter unbelief, and like every paltry driveller who chafes at the restraints of religion you cry out as your apology: "Science has convinced me of the absurdity of belief in the supernatural." Half the people I have heard utter this cry could not tell me what they really or definitely meant by science. They did not see that it is absurd to apply science to things supernatural or spiritual, for modern science must of necessity limit its scope, to what is purely material and natural."

"Oh now Father," the Judge blandly interposed, "you must admit that science has undermined faith."

What do you mean by science, Judge? You and I may be at variance on matters altogether different, science as I understand it is a purely experimental investigation of mere sensible phenomena, the study of physical facts by means of the measuring rod, the crucible, the microscope and the balance. Or I will take it further, and apply the name to mathematical calculations, based upon the motion of material particles in space. Having regard only to the first interpretation, science is limited to matter. Taking the extended definition, the deductions of science are necessarily circumscribed by the limits of matter. Should a scientist extend his study to the consideration of reality and entity, relative to their origin and destiny, he has passed from the province of science to that of metaphysics. Then he must in theorizing about the nature of things, and in his conjecturings as to their origins, should he pose as a savant in those matters, speak not as a scientist, but as a philosopher; and in his utterances anent them he must conform to the inexorable laws of the syllogism."

"Father, your eloquence seems to me without point. What after all does it matter, whether the so-called scientist deals with purely sensible and

material phenomena or enters into the domain of metaphysics, when by his discoveries he can rule the spiritual world out of existence."

"My dear Judge, you are basing your arguments on something that has never been achieved, nor never will be, but which you take for granted. When did science rule the spiritual world out of existence? I myself am an enthusiastic student of science. I rejoice in its modern developments in as far as they are beneficial to the human race. But of all our great scientists, of all our great physicians and surgeons, who of them with all their marvellous compounds and subtle analyses of brain and heart, with all their clever discoveries of the functions and uses, of almost all the nerves and tissues in the human frame, who among them has ever approached any nearer to the discovery of that elusive principle of life which holds sway over, and directs the upbuilding of the human organism? They have been magicians indeed in their discoveries of the mere material elements of man's being, but once the soul, the principle of life was fled their powers ceased. They have never been able to disprove or overthrow, the law of nature, that life comes only from life, for by no collocation or collaboration of atoms,

have they been able to derive life from non-life. Why Judge! it is only the amateurs, the camp-followers of science, who shout forth the senseless slogan-cry so cheering to moral degenerates, that faith in the supernatural has been overthrown. My dear Friend, Faith and Science move on parallel lines, their objective is different. Science can help Faith, but in the words of St. Thomas : "Where Science ends, Faith begins." Some of the greatest Scientists have averred, that the supernatural world is outside the region of Science. Lankester, the brilliant Kepler, Lord Kelvin, Stokes and last though by no means least, I will mention the great Pasteur, who at the end of his brilliant career said : "The more I know, the more nearly does my faith approach that of the Breton peasant. Could I but know it all, my faith would doubtless equal that of the Breton peasant."

"My dear Father Coleman, your arguments are indeed convincing. I am sorry I have to leave you as I promised to be one of a theatre-party to-night. Faust is the piece I believe. Father, before I go let me tell you what I have been too proud to admit to mortal man before. All this cant about science versus faith, has never persuaded me against my holy religion. As you said

awhile ago, I am but a paltry driveller and only pretended to be influenced by the rationalistic stuff which I really condemned. I gave up the practice of my faith in order to have no barriers before my ambition. Please God I shall soon be reconciled. I must see you Father, as soon as possible and make my peace with God. Good-night Father."

The priest could not credit his senses, that he had heard aright. The confession was so unexpected and so humble that he could not hide his astonishment. The family noticed how pre-occupied he was after the Judge had gone out.

"What weighty matters have you and Father been discussing, Father Coleman?" Victor queried. "Mother has been addressing you for the last five minutes, but to no avail."

Father Coleman laughingly apologised. Shortly afterwards he bade them good-night and went home. Speaking to Victor who escorted him to the hall door, he said :

"Victor, there is a great happiness in store for you all, my boy. Your father will soon come back to the fold. All your prayers will receive their reward. I can say no more just now, but let us thank God."

CHAPTER XIX.

The Accident.

Judge Marshall had accepted an invitation to a theatre party at Her Majesty's. Faust was the piece to be staged, and by a first-class company of operatic artists. The Marguerite, Faust and Mephistopheles were especially good, as the Judge's friend had informed him. Always a lover of music, he went to the theatre that night anticipating from the enacting of Gounod's masterpiece a delightful treat, and intending, should the performance come near his ideal, to bring his wife and family the next evening.

The curtain went up soon after the Judge's party arrived. Very soon, Judge Marshall forgot his surroundings and friends, in his rapt enjoyment of the magnificent music, the glorious combination of impassioned singing and first-class acting which gives to grand-opera its greatest charm. Goethe's immortal characters owe not a little of their immortality to the glorious creation of exquisite music, Gounod has woven round them.

In the Judge's esteem Faust was as passionate that night—in fact like an Aeolian harp, a living lyre in whom every gust of passion, could excite corresponding feelings and desires that lingered in harmonies of feeling, until the desire was satisfied. Gretchen as vain and weak, and Mephisto as terrible as the author had wished to represent them.

Marguerite is no heroine, just a simple girl who was tempted and yielded, and then died mad in prison. But the prima donna who played the part of Marguerite, portrayed the simple country girl so vividly, her unsuspecting innocence, her vanity so artless, when in the Jewel Song she took her glittering gems from their casket and bedecked herself, all the while rippling forth in laughing thrills, like a happy song-bird, as she gazed in the mirror and saw reflected her girlish beauty, emphasised by her costly adornments. Then her voice such a glorious soprano, so grand and full of feeling both in the “abandon” of her joy and in the anguish of her despair.

Faust's tenor was full and rich. Mephisto's deep bass together with his uncanny acting, were indeed fearfully suggestive of the spirit of evil.

Judge Marshall's nerves had suffered recently. Norman's departure under his Father's unjust dis-

pleasure, the tragedy of Cosgrove's death, an insistent remorse since Norman left, all these combined, had disturbed his mind and made him more impressionable than he usually was. Then the controversy with Father Coleman that evening, climaxed by his own confession of the hypocrisy of his life, to his clerical friend, had caused a certain amount of excitement that had not subsided when he arrived at the theatre. Hence the acting was in a certain sense a representation of his own life. Had he not, he asked himself, been in a sense another Faust, bartering his soul's salvation for the sake of honours and worldly emoluments? What if God should not spare him time to repent and atone! Was he already in the power of the evil one? He grew terrified at the thought. His friends noticed how unduly excited he appeared. He seemed absent-minded when he bade them good-night and rode away in his motor.

In the car he could not remain inactive. He took the chauffeur's place, and sped the automobile at a dangerous pace. He was usually a careful driver, but to-night somehow he was rashly reckless. He did not realize the perilous speed he was making, or if he did perhaps he found relief in this mad pace from the fever in his brain. His head

grew dizzy, his eyes dazed, the chauffeur gave a loud cry of warning as the car swerved to the side of the road. It was too late, there was an awful crash, the car collided 'gainst a tree and was totally wrecked. The chauffeur escaped with a bruising but Judge Marshall lay unconscious on the pavement, dead, to all appearance.

The accident occurred only a quarter of a mile from "Kincora." The chauffeur borrowed a bicycle from one of the crowd which had collected, and rode off for Dr. Marshall.

Our friends at "Kincora" were laughing and jesting in the cosy parlour, when the hall-door bell rang with an unusually loud peal.

"Who on earth can that be?" Victor exclaimed, as he hastily left the room.

After a little while, his Mother and the others heard a murmur as of startled servants receiving orders from him, then he hastily came up stairs again.

His face was pallid, as he communicated the news of the accident.

"Mother, father has met with an accident down the road. There's no need to be alarmed, but get his room ready. George, come along with me I may require you."

Mrs Marshall reeled, and would have fallen had not Moira supported her. She revived quickly.

"Oh Divine Heart of Jesus, have mercy on him," she murmured. "Moira, Violet pray that God may not take him unprepared." Come children, let us prepare his room. Oh my God, my God, hear my prayers! Take him if Thou wilt but grant him time to repent."

"Mother darling, be brave," Moira urged. He will not die. God will hear our prayers. I have not the slightest doubt but that Father will recover, no matter how serious the accident."

"Moira my child, your trust in God puts me to shame. May God reward your holy faith, my darling. Now I can be strong."

With deft, quick fingers they arranged the room. Moira rang up Father Coleman, and asked him to come at once to "Kincora."

They waited at the hall-door. The melancholy procession soon appeared. So serious did Victor consider his Father's condition that he had not procured a carriage, but had him brought to "Kincora" on a stretcher.

"Mother," Victor said, "Father is badly injured, but there is no need to be alarmed. "George went in to town for Doctor S—— and a nurse.

Now Mother dearest, I know you will be brave. Father is still unconscious, but with God's help, he will soon revive."

Mrs Marshall now that there was something to do, summoned up all her womanly fortitude. She assisted Victor to remove the dusty, blood-stained clothing. Victor pronounced one arm fractured, though there was slight concussion. He supposed there were internal injuries as well, but did not alarm his mother by telling her so. He did not think the injuries to the head serious, for though his father was still unconscious the symptoms were not very alarming.

George Harding soon arrived bringing with him Doctor S—— the eminent surgeon from the city, and a trained nurse. Victor and Doctor S—— held a long consultation, while Mrs Marshall and the nurse applied warm fomentations to the body of the unconscious man, and strove to stimulate respiration.

Father Coleman waited in an adjoining room the Judge's return to consciousness.

An hour after they had brought him home, the Judge opened his eyes and recognised Victor bending over him.

"Where am I Victor? Ah yes, the opera! Mephisto! the accident."

He strove to turn on his side, but his injured arm caused him to fall back with a groan of pain. Then he started, and a wild frightened look lit up his eyes.

"Victor, I am dying! Send for Father Coleman, quick Victor, Oh my God, spare me."

"Father your friend is here, but pray be calm, you are not dying. However I will call him in. You will feel better when you have eased your mind."

The others left the room when the priest entered. Mrs Marshall went to her own apartment, and gave thanks to God that her husband had himself asked for the priest, and come what would after, he would be at peace with God.

For a whole week the master of "Kincora" was at death's door. Sometimes he was conscious and spoke words of love to his wife. More often he was delirious and called for Norman, his own merry boy. Then he raved of Mephisto and Faust and asked God in wild tones to save him from the demon. Then again he would speak in a voice of rapture of his sorrow, and thank God that he had been spared to confess his sins.

All these days Moira was radiantly hopeful. Here then was the way in which God had answered her prayer. He had brought her father to death's door, and terrified him with the thought of his unfitness to appear before the Almighty Judge. Moira prayed on, and was confident even when the others were anxious, that her Father would be restored to health as well as to grace.

At the end of a week Judge Marshall's grand constitution had triumphed. He had passed the crisis and was making rapid progress. Another week, and leaning on Victor's strong arm, he was able to walk out to the balcony, where his family ministered to his wants, as he reclined on a low sofa, in the glow of the Spring sunshine.

"Oh, Irene! How can I ever thank God sufficiently for his mercy to me," he said to his wife. "And you, my darling how sad I have made your life, by my infidelity to my religion all these years. You remember what you said to me that day when the boys left Xavier's. Yes, Irene! I have never been truly happy since I renounced my faith, but now that I have gone back to my allegiance I feel ever so happy."

"Yes! Henry, I believe you. Ah, God has been

very good to us. How blessed we are in our children! You will live long enough my husband to atone for the past. By the way Henry, you no longer regret Norman's departure, do you?"

"Oh no, no! Irene. I would gladly give all my children to God now, did He call them to the religious life. Ah! it breaks my heart to think how I sent my brave lad away. Irene I am strong enough to write now. I must write to him to-day, to ask his forgiveness and send him my blessing."

"Do Henry, and you will gladden our young saint's heart. But Henry Moira wishes to speak to you this afternoon. I shall send her to you now."

"Well Moira, my little sunbeam! What have you to say to your old Dad?" the Judge queried when Moira in a soft, clinging dress of white, came out on the balcony and having kissed her father, sat near the sofa.

In a rapt voice, the young girl told her father of her prayers and her sacrifice on his behalf. She told him that ever since she had offered that sacrifice, she realized that her true vocation was to be a white-robed sister, in that order of sublimest human charity. She pleaded with her Father to

place no bar in her way, but to allow her to fulfil her promise to God immediately.

The Judge listened with strong emotion. He covered his child's face with passionate kisses and said—

“Moirra, my angel! my darling! God has made me, all unworthy that I am, the father of two saints. Such love as yours, my child is divinely inspired. No, Moirra, I shall place no barriers in your way. Go my darling; as soon as you please. Though I give you to God, you will be my child all the time.”

A long, long time did Father and daughter hold loving converse. Victor and Violet had been out for a drive. When they came out on the balcony after their return, they guessed what topic Moirra and the Judge were so absorbed in, and quietly withdrew.

Mrs Marshall looked out from her husband's room, before she came to help the Judge inside. Her heart went up to God in gratitude. She thought of the joy there was in heaven over the sinner who was doing penance, and of the angels singing to her lovely child: “*Veni sponsa Christi, accipe coronam quam tibi Dominus praeparavit in aeternum.*”

CHAPTER XX.

On the Wide Seas.

On the night of Judge Marshall's accident, Norman Marshall was enjoying the "dolce far niente" on the bosom of the South Pacific. Bareheaded and exultant, he leaned over the rail and watched the waters down below, where churned and ploughed by the ship's great propellers, they gleamed white and phosphorescent in the moonlight. The air vibrated around him with the croon of the engines. Merry laughter and the sound of dancing feet came wafted towards him from the other end of the deck where the passengers were holding a social and enjoying themselves. The salt zephyrs fanned his face and played with the curls on his brows, and in his nostrils the smell of the ocean water. A silvery moon lit all the leagues of rippling waters, from the ship to the ever-receding horizon where the twinkling stars glimmered over the shimmering waters.

"New stars all night, above the brim
Of waters, lightened into view,

They climbed as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment, as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The homeless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying, shone the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield."

The spell of God's mirrored Omnipotence was on the young fellow. He revelled in the beauty of the moonlit waste of waters. As on the Buffalo years before, the beauty that surrounded him now caused him again to feel very near to God. But now there was no serpent to trail over his Eden. Suffering and sorrow might indeed he thought await him beyond yon star-studded horizon where ocean and sky seemed to meet, but it mattered not. God had called him. He had followed the Voice, and God would give him strength to endure. Then he thought of his olden days, his beloved home, his merry college years, his holidays at "Mundoona," and bitters 'mong the sweets, his father's displeasure, his own former waywardness, and Ernest Cosgrove's awful death. To-night his soul was too peaceful to be troubled by unpleasant thoughts. Cosgrove's image he blotted out. His own resistance 'gainst grace, he determined with all the enthusiasm of his young heart to atone for. His father's obduracy and anger, he

felt confident would not last. He felt to-night a peculiar feeling as if he had been reconciled with his father.

“Thus bending o’er the vessel’s side, to gaze on Dian’s wave-reflected sphere,” like Childe Harold in occupation, in his admiration of the tranquil beauty of the ocean, but by no means like the exiled misanthrope, the surfeited sensualist of Byron’s poem in any other respect, for his heart was at peace with God and man, Norman under the tropical skies, found in the moonlit seas, inspiration for holy visions and glad remembrances.

The breeze freshened. The ripples became waves. The waters that had gleamed and frisked in the silvery glow now grew more restless, though by no means boisterous as the white foamed waves chased one another over the vast waste. The dancing had ceased, some of the passengers had repaired to the music-room, and some were lolling on deck listening to the voices of the singers. Some one with a fine baritone was singing that exquisite little ballad of Tennyson’s.

“Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.”

Frank Coleman strolled on to where Norman was leaning over the ship's side.

"Still dreaming, Norman," he exclaimed, as he placed his hand on his friend's shoulder. "You must forgive me Normy if I stayed away too long, but a dance on deck on a night like this is irresistible. I never noticed the time slip. You must have been lonely here by yourself all this time."

"Not at all Frank, I am never lonely when beauty like this surrounds me. Isn't it Byron who sings somewhere—

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion
dwell,

And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been.
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold ;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean—

This is not solitude, 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her
stores unroll'd."

"Yes Norman the words are Byron's, if I remember aright. He expresses the same thought more beautifully still in that apostrophe of his on Ocean, which occurs I think in one of the cantos of Childe Harold :—

“There is a pleasure in the pathless wood,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.
I love not man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal,
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe and feel
What I can ne’er express, yet cannot all
conceal.”

“But come Norman, let us descend from the clouds and smoke a cigar, and take a stroll on deck before we go to our bunks.”

“I wonder what are they all doing at home now Frank, and where is the other half of the Inseparables.”

“You bet they are thinking of us, Norman. Harding is busy these days I daresay electioneering with his father. George is a great soul. He idolizes his parents. By the way Normy, I am glad that Victor and Violet are to be married.”

“So am I, Frank. When Moira intends to enter a convent, it is consoling to know that Mother will have such a loving daughter as Violet to take her place.”

The voyage was ended all too soon, so even Frank thought much as he longed to meet his sister. The weather had been perfect. Neither of

them had fallen a victim to the "mal de mer." Their fellow-passengers were pleasant folks. When our friends entered the Golden Gate into the beautiful bay at San Francisco surrounded with its cordon of wooded hills, they realized that they had arrived indeed at the great Western Continent and would in a few days be treading the streets of the Earthquake City before they would steam across the continent to New York.

As Frank was now very eager to meet his sister they remained in 'Frisco only a brief time. The day after their arrival they boarded the Eastern Express and were whirled rapidly to New York.

Arrived in the city they were met by Eileen who looked a lovely girl even in her mourning costume. The meeting between her and Frank was a joyous one indeed. Our readers can well imagine their feelings after years of separation.

After a fortnight spent as Frank's guest in his Uncle's stately home, now Frank's own property, Norman bade his friend good-bye, and set sail for Ireland. This last parting was perhaps his severest ordeal. Coleman and he had been such bosom friends, they were such kindred spirits and understood one another so thoroughly that the parting was indeed a cruel wrench. In bidding him

adieu he was severing himself from the last of the Inseparables, breaking the last link between his new life and the old.

When the last bell gave warning to visitors to leave the big ship, Frank with moist eyes tore himself away.

“Good-bye Norman, my best friend! I will meet you soon in the Emerald Isle. I hate the rush and roar of this great city. Eileen too is anxious to come away with me to Australia. Good-bye Norman. May God ever bless you. Don’t forget me in your prayers.”

“Good-bye Frank, my truest friend! Good-bye dear lad. May God guard and bless you. I will pray for you dear friend, though I know you need no prayers of mine. God grant a happy re-union to the Inseparables in the Sunny South.”

“Bright sunny Norman!” Frank mused when the ship had disappeared from sight. “How I wish I had your grand vocation, but I know I am not called. God in His Providence decrees for me a different lot, and a different work.”

Norman did not remain sad very long. He rallied his depressed spirits soon after the great liner had lost sight of the shore and was his old gay self again.

“Frank the noblest of my friends, the truest, manliest man I have ever known, how I shall miss you,” he murmured. “May God bless you my friend. May you fulfil your great ideals and meet some one worthy to share your life with you and to be your helper in doing good.”



CHAPTER XXI.

Frank Meets his Fate.

Frank Coleman and his sister decided to sell their Uncle's Home in New York. For a fortnight after Norman had sailed for Ireland, Frank was busy getting things to rights and directing his lawyers to dispose of all his and Eileen's property bequeathed to them by their generous uncle. The lawyers were most capable and trustworthy, so he entrusted all his business to them and with his sister set out on a tour of the States before they should bid adieu to the land of the Stars and Stripes.

For two months they toured the continent, sight seeing. They heard the mighty waters roar, as they rushed over the gigantic falls at Niagara. They crossed neath the Falls in the steamboat "Maid of the Mist." They climbed the Rockies and marvelled at the vast gorges and canyons. They travelled through Mexico, and beheld the monuments that told of the days before its conquest, when the Aztec Empire was ruled over by

Montezuma (with whose history Macauley extravagantly states every school-boy is familiar) before the intrepid Fernando Cortes conquered him, and subsequently defeated the heroic Guatemozin, and floated the banner of Castille over the chief city of Mexico.

Eileen while she enjoyed the monuments of the civilization of a vanished race in Mexico, the rocky gorges and the wooded heights of the Rockies, the vast variety of natural wonders in National Park, the thunder of mighty forces of rushing waters at Niagara, was tired of the strenuousness of American life, and kept urging her brother to leave behind them the vaunted wonders of the Yankees and to take her across the Atlantic to her own beloved Ireland.

Frank too, though in tourist parlance he wanted 'to do' America thoroughly, grew weary of the rush and turmoil of the land of Combines and Trusts, and so at the end of May he and Eileen bade a last adieu to the Stars and Stripes and set sail for Inisfail. Now that they were crossing the Atlantic and on the gallant liner bounding over the leagues of ocean towards it, they longed more ardently than ever to tread again the hallowed soil of Holy Ireland.

When the shores of Columbia had faded away on the horizon, Frank turned to his sister and said :—

“Eileen, I shall leave you for a moment to run down to my cabin for my Australian mail. I got it this morning but did not have time to read my letters, with all the hurry and bustle before we came on board.”

“Very well, Frank. Please bring your letters right along here. There was a parcel also if I am not mistaken. I think it must contain some copies of your book. I am just dying to read it.”

Frank returned very soon. The parcel did contain as Eileen had surmised several copies of Frank’s novel. There was also a bundle of papers, all containing eulogistic critiques of the book.

“Oh Frank! Do read the letters quickly. I want to get away into a corner to read your story. I can’t tell you how excited I am, now that I really hold your first book in my hands.”

“Patience Eileen. Let us first hear what Victor has to say.”

Victor’s letter contained the news of the Judge’s accident, his recovery and subsequent reconciliation with his Church. He wrote hearty congratu-

lations from all at "Kincora," on the great success of Frank's book. "It is beautiful Frank, old man. People are raving over it. We hope you will give us many more such grand proofs of your literary power, to uphold the Faith so dear to all of us."

Eileen was convulsed with laughter when Frank read a breezy letter from George Harding, describing in the most comical manner, the many ludicrous events connected with the Federal Elections. His Father had won by a considerable majority. George urged Frank to return to Victoria as speedily as possible, as he promised to give the Inseparables and Co. what he termed a big "Blow-Out" at "Mundoona" in honour of his father's victory.

"What a droll character this George must be!" Eileen exclaimed. "Do you know Frank, from all I have heard you and Norman relate of your friends in Victoria I am just longing to meet them all."

"Yes Eileen, I can understand," Frank answered. "I promise you, that you will not know them very long, before you will learn to love them even as I do. Eileen let us thank the Good God for the great happiness there is now at 'Kincora,' because of Judge Marshall's conversion."

The last letter was read, and brother and sister separated in order to be altogether free to peruse the contents of Frank's much talked of book.

What a feeling of exquisite joy and pardonable pride is a young author's, when he holds in his hands for the first time, his first book fresh from the publisher's, in all the glory of its new binding, green, or crimson, or blue, or brown. How he welcomes this fulfilment of months of labour and hope, and looks so fondly on the little volume, this child of his genius, with something of the parental love a father bears his first-born. And then when the critics do not scathe his work, and sneer at his ideals, but find his book worthy of praise; how he rejoices and hopes that the pages may inspire in others the holy enthusiasm he experienced when penning them. The young artist who has unveiled to the world of art his first picture, the musician who has composed and played before an enraptured audience his first grand oratorio or sweet sonato, these and others such as they who have externated in colour or sound or writing, ideals too great to be ever thoroughly expressed, by any harmony of sound, or blending of colours, or flow of written eloquence, can sympathise with the sacred rapture of the young writ-

er who caresses his first book, after its debut in the literary world, when he looks on it with pleasure, not because of any fame or gain it may bring him, but because in many hearts and many homes, it may inspire feelings pure and holy and ennobling.

Frank Coleman's thoughts were such as these, as he read the various critiques on his book, and then opened it, and read and re-read the pages and passages dearest to him. Then he shut it and turning his earnest eyes and manly face towards Heaven, thanked the God who had blessed his first work with so much success.

The voyage across the Atlantic was drawing to an end. On the fifth morning after they had seen the statue of Liberty fade away in the distance, Frank and Eileen were pacing the deck, enjoying the fresh morning breeze, when the Captain smilingly saluted them.

"Enjoying the morning sunshine Mr Coleman. Good morning Miss Coleman. Do you wish to see the your native Kerry hills, they are just in sight?"

"Oh Captain Anstey! where, where?" Let me see them," the eager girl cried.

Away in the horizon, but becoming gradually

more distinct, was the rock-bound coast of Kerry. Bold and majestic, the mountains soon grew clearer and grander to the view. Frank and Eileen were most excited, as they saluted their native land in the words of an exquisite Irish poem :—

“Oh Ireland! Isn’t it grand you look,
Like a bride in her rich adorning,
And with all the pent-up love of my heart,
I bid you the ‘top of the morning.’ ”

A few hours later Frank and Eileen had landed in Queenstown, the beautiful cathedral town where six years before they had parted in such bitter sorrow.

It was a happy summer. Frank and his sister visited the Home of their childhood, and were lavish in their gifts to the dear old church, where their parents were married, and where they themselves made their First Communion. They revelled in the scenery at Killarney and Waterville and Glengariff. They sought out their father’s old friend Dr. Enright in Dublin. In fact they were his guests whenever they stayed in the city. Norman, now a young Jesuit novice they visited at the house of the society at Milltown Park. Accompanied by Doctor Enright and his wife they

made a tour of beautiful Wicklow. The summer in Ireland passed quickly. About the end of September they bade farewell to Norman, and their friends before they left for London and the Continent on their way to the Sunny South.

In bidding Norman adieu Frank intimated that he would return to the Emerald Isle in twelve months' time. He informed him that he had found in Dr. Enright's daughter Kathleen the girl who would be his wife. With her father's consent they had become engaged.

Norman was delighted. Miss Enright was a very refined and accomplished girl, remarkably alike his sister Moira in appearance. He knew she was a most devout Catholic and in every way suited to be the partner of the noble young fellow who was the bosom friend of his boyhood and early youth.

CHAPTER XXII.

Mundoona Again.

It was Christmas time again at "Mundoona." The day had been very hot, but now in the evening after the sun had set a cool refreshing breeze was blowing. It murmured through the trees and played round the house. It rustled the palms on the lawn, the ferns on the verandah and the lace draperies of the open windows. It was so inviting that the family and guests in the dining-room could not withstand its refreshing caresses, so they came out on the verandah, and lounging on the cane chairs formed a most pleasant home group round the easy chair, where John Harding, despite the worries of politics, was smoking as placidly and contentedly as he did that night five years before, when he told yarns of his early days to the young fellows seated round him.

All our old friends save two whom God had called apart were assembled at "Mundoona." Norman was away in Holy Ireland undergoing the training that would fit him for the holy work of a

son of St. Ignatius. Moira had entered the Good Shepherd Convent at Abbotsford three months before. Save these two all the others were present at this "Reunion of the Inseparables" as George styled it: John Harding and his wife, the genial host and hostess, with their children George and Violet, Judge and Mrs Marshall, Victor, Frank Coleman and his sister Eileen. They were a merry party indeed.

The Judge had long ago recovered the ill effects of his accident, he had regained too with his return to his old faith the happy buoyant spirits of his youth; there was now no cloud over "Kincora," hence Mrs Marshall was radiantly happy.

"Well Frank," George exclaimed, "you have deserted me too. What do you think Judge of these two disloyal chaps? Victor thinks of nobody but Violet here. Frank has left his heart behind him in Ireland. I wish those weddings were over, we might then get back the fellows to their normal condition. I guess I must go away to Norman and become a holy Jesuit. I am deserted."

"I am sure you have no idea of such a thing, George my boy," the Judge laughed. "Why, instead of this society of Inseparables going to

pieces as you would have us think, it is on the contrary gaining an increase of members, and if I am not mistaken you will very soon ask Miss Eileen here to become a life-member."

There was a regular outburst of laughter at the Judge's remark. George and Eileen seemed confused. Indeed the Judge's powers of observation were not impaired by his late accident for he as well as our other friends saw that George and Eileen Coleman were indeed inseparable since she had arrived in Victoria, so it was almost certain that he as well as Victor and Frank would soon be a benedict.

The young fellows had each received a letter from Norman that morning. He told them he would be at their reunion at "Mundoona" in spirit.

The parents of the young people were indeed as happy as the young folks themselves that evening. They saw around them in their children splendid samples of noble manly youth and fair virtuous maidenhood.

Dear readers with a prayer and a hope let us say "ave et vale" to "the Inseparables." Let us pray that like them the youth of our young

nation may come through the pitfalls and temptations of their immature years as pure, as manly, as unswerving in their allegiance to Faith as were Victor, Norman, Frank and George. And let us hope that this little tale may accomplish its purpose, this little book its mission, that it may place before our young Catholics noble ideals and stimulate them to fulfil them as did—The Inseparables.

The End.



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